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FAMILIAR TALKS

ON

ENGLISH LITERATURE.

A MANUAL EMBRACING THE GREAT EPOCHS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE, FROM THE ENGLISH CONQUEST OF BRITAIN, 449, TO THE DEATH OF WALTER SCOTT, 1832.

BY

ABBY SAGE RICHARDSON.

In literature we have present and prepared to form us, the best which has been taught and said in the world. Our business is to get at this best, and to know it well.—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

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PREFACE.

As THE title of my book suggests, this is a history of English Literature, told in familiar style. Its first and overruling purpose is to create a desire on the part of those who read it, to know the best works of our best authors. I do not believe in anything said or written about English Literature which shall serve as a substitute for literature itself, or that does not lead directly to the reading of the best books. For my own part, I would rather know thoroughly half a dozen English classics, than all the works on literature ever written.

Although for several years I have been talking to classes, principally of young women, on the subjects this book includes, this is in no way a report of those talks, but has a unity and sequence which is not quite possible in detached lectures. I have endeavored to show the growth of literature from its beginning down to the end of the first third of this century. From that time the great names that appear are the names of living men, whose place in the archives of literature is not yet assigned. It is time only which tries the value of an author and sets him among his peers.

In a small volume like this, where I have made the attempt to combine brevity with a certain amount of detail about the

author spoken of, together with an extract from his works, it has been impossible to mention every great name in the annals of English Literature. What I have tried to do has been to touch on the most salient points in the growth of literature; to mention all names of those who have had any marked influence upon it; to show briefly the cause of this influence; and, where it was possible, to quote sufficient from the author to excite a desire to know more of him. To carry out this plan in small space, required that much should be left unsaid which I should like to say, and that many names should be omitted which are worth more than a mere mention; it also required that I should keep strictly within the limits of pure literature,—poetry, essays, fiction—and leave the historians, the divines, the scientists, out of my plan of work, except where they were so associated with elegant literature that their writings enter its lists.

As this is in no wise a cyclopedia of literature, I have not given biographical sketches of these writers, and have purposely omitted all facts about them except those facts of character or life which bear upon their work, sometimes adding incidents which would give interest or vividness to the story. I have always felt it unjust to literature to associate too closely the external life of an author with his productions, and I have tried to avoid that injustice. Handbooks of literature, especially those used in schools, have been too much like grave-yards, where a series of stones recorded the life, death, and principal events relating to an author, ending with a few lines from his work as a sort of epitaph. I think this method has made the study of literature uninteresting. Thus, if my treatment concerning the facts about a writer is desultory, and leaves unsaid what the

cyclopedias say, I submit it to criticism as part of my method.

I am aware that the style I have used will be regarded as sometimes too familiar for the subject. But I hope my book may be read largely by young people; I hope it may be read aloud in classes devoted to the study of literature, and I have thus used a colloquial tone, hoping by means of it more easily to gain the interest and the ear of the reader.

Lastly, I have used the words *our* literature, *our* English authors, all through the book, with intention. Writing as I do for American readers, for the young people of our country, I have endeavored to impress on them a pride in the works written in their language; I want them to feel that they have as much share and as much pride in the glorious names of Shakspeare and Milton as if their grandfathers had not crossed the ocean to settle in Massachusetts and Virginia. English Literature up to the year 1800 is as much *our* literature as it is that of any girl or boy born in London or in Yorkshire. Let us lay hold of and claim this grand inheritance.

A. S. R.

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English Literature.

PART I.

PRIOR TO CHAUCER.

449 TO 1300.

INTRODUCTORY.

A GREAT preacher of the past, writing many hundred years before the invention of printing, has said: "Of making many books there is no end." I often wonder what he would think of this century in which we live. More than any other since the world began, this is an age of books. Every year the great printing-presses turn out thousands of volumes, and innumerable magazines and newspapers, which find their way to the most remote parts of the country. Every year books become more and more a factor in the education of all classes of people, the poor as well as the rich. In days when there were no printing-presses, when everything had to be copied with tedious labor upon parchment or paper, the knowledge of books was confined to few. Now the boys and girls in our common schools can know more books, and can easily own a larger number, than the kings and nobles of early days. This does not prove that the man without books need be ignorant, or the man with them altogether learned. There is a great deal of culture to be gained outside a printed page, and a man may be a narrow-minded pedant with his head stuffed with book-learning; a great poet has told us about

> "The bookful blockhead, ignorantly read,
> With loads of learned lumber in his head."

But the man who combines the largest knowledge of good books, with breadth of thought, wide experience, and prac-

tical knowledge of the world, is likely to be a man of the highest and best culture.

Since we believe, therefore, that books are among the most important tools with which we are to carve out our lives, we want to know something about the best books in the world. Among the great quantity of matter which comes day after day from our printing presses there must of course be a great deal of refuse and rubbish; and the books preserved to us from the past are likely to be the best, because time has sifted much of the chaff from the wheat, and preserved only the wisest and wittiest things that have issued from men's minds. In the old books of the past we find a record of the best thoughts of the greatest minds that have ever lived. And in the books written by men of the past who spoke the language that *we* speak, we shall find a record of the thoughts and deeds of that race from which we descended. See, then, what an influence these deeds and thoughts of the great Englishmen of the past must have on us to-day. I want you to picture in your imagination this stream of thought like a great river, flowing down through hundreds of years, bearing in its bosom so much to fertilize and enrich the age in which we live, and bearing onward to the future all that is noblest and greatest from our own time. This wonderful river of thought flowing down to us and beyond us, is ENGLISH LITERATURE. And if you can feel how interesting to you is the knowledge of the books that keep a record of this thought, written in our English speech from earliest days, and how important it is for you to know something about it, we can begin together with real interest and sympathy, these *Talks on English Literature.*

In one sense literature comprises all the books ever written: books on philosophy, science, text-books on all subjects, as well as poetry, essays and fiction. But, by general understanding there has come to be a division in the world of books; and the department of poetry, fiction, and the elegant classics is separated from the more profound and scien-

tific order of writings. This first department is sometimes called pure literature, or *polite literature*. The French have a better word than we; they say *belles lettres*, from two words, meaning beautiful (*belles*) literature (*lettres*). It is this beautiful literature—the writings of the poets, the essayists, and the novelists—that these talks are designed to touch.

Among these writers the poet is the chief, and it is the poet and his work to whom in such a book we give the most attention. Of all writers the poet has done most in all ages to refine and elevate. There is something in the melodious arrangement of words, clothing a beautiful thought, that has been able to influence the mind in all ages. The poet makes even common things seem rich; and if he puts a noble spirit in his verse, makes life seem purer and higher. As one of this company of writers says,* whom we shall hear more of bye-and-bye, "Therefore, of all sciences is the poet the monarch, for he cometh unto you with words set in delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the enchanting skill of music, and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you; with a tale that holdeth children from play and old men from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue, even as the child is brought to take most wholesome things by hiding them in others that have a pleasant taste." Therefore, although we intend in these talks to follow the whole course of English literature, we shall dwell longest upon the poets and their works.

I have thus given you in brief the plan of our talks. I hope as we go on together, that you will find such an interest in literature, and will so feel its worth and richness, that from such brief accounts of the great authors and their works as I can give you, you will be led to know them more thoroughly, and to make them your friends. "And the love of books," says a French writer, "is one which, having taken possession of a man, will never leave him; a book is a friend which never changes."

*Sir Philip Sidney.

TALK I.

Telling about the English People, Who They were, and how They First Came to the Islands of Britain.

Before we begin to talk of English literature, we naturally want to know something about the people from whom the name of England and English is derived, since from their language our modern speech has been formed, and it is this race whom we are proud to call our forefathers. Let us first ask, then, who these people were who have stamped their name and speech so powerfully on the world's history?

We find them first, a union of tribes known by the names of Saxons, Jutes, and Angles, or English, dwelling in that part of Europe which borders the North Sea, and in the islands close to this mainland. Whence they came hither, and how long they had possessed that soil we are not certain. We know that most of the nations of Europe spring from a great mother-race called the *ARYAN* race; that this Aryan race has many branches, and that the Teutonic branch of the family is among the strongest of them all. Wherever we find these fair-haired, blue-eyed, strong-limbed men, who speak with Teutonic tongues,* we find them playing an important part in history. It was a tribe of these Teutons, the Goths—who in the fourth and fifth centuries swooped down on the great Roman empire, and trampled it under their feet. It was another band of these strong heroes called

*The languages derived from the Teutonic branch of the Aryan are: 1st, Gothic; 2d, Scandinavian; 3d, High German; 4th, Low German. The Gothic is the oldest of these. From the high German comes modern German; from the Scandinavian the languages of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Iceland; from the low German, English and Dutch.

Francs, or *free-men*, who conquered what was formerly known as Gaul, and gave it its modern name of France. It was the Scandinavian division of these peoples who, spreading from Denmark to Norway and Sweden, became the sea-kings of the North—sending their ships to colonize Iceland, and sailing over the Northern Atlantic to Greenland, more than four hundred years before Columbus discovered America. And it was still another horde of these Teutons who, settling all along the moist, uninviting shores of the North Sea, finally became the conquerers and holders of the British Isles. Angles or *English* was the name common to the tribes inhabiting the various settlements along the coasts of the North Sea, and in its islands, so that of all the names which could have been given to this great nation none is so appropriate as the *English*.

Adventurous and bold as they were by nature, and living on the borders of the North Sea, or in the islands surrounded by its waters, they naturally became daring sailors, holding stern rule over the waves they claimed as their rightful domain. Their power was soon felt among neighboring nations, and they were heard of in the islands of Britain, separated from them only by the seas on which they ranged.

These islands of Britain were then inhabited by a people who belonged to the Keltic branch of the great Aryan family. These people were the Kymry, known also in history as *ancient Britons*. Long before the coming of the English the country of the Britons had been invaded by Roman legions under the great Cæsar, and the Roman empire had kept up a sort of rule through the reign of several Emperors. They had built military roads, camps and walls on British soil, and as the Romans were the best road-makers in the world, you may find many traces of their work in England to this day. The Romans, too, had brought Christianity to Britain and the new religion was adopted there, so that the Britons felt their superiority over other peoples, and looked on their neighbor Teutons across the

North Sea as barbarous and heathen men, who knew not the true God and were outside the pale of religion and civilization. You will find it hard to believe that the Britons could have invited a people whom they so looked down upon to come and live among them. Yet in the middle of the 5th century such an invitation was given, and a band of English led by Hengist and Horsa took advantage of it. The cause which led the Britons to make this invitation was a mixture of fear and prudence. They had at their backs in Scotland, and across the Irish Sea in Ireland, bands of savage enemies—the Picts and Scots, who were constantly overrunning and devastating Britain. These enemies were dreaded by the British, while they dreaded almost equally the savage rovers of the North Sea. They thought by making friends with the latter and inviting them to come to Britain they might get their aid against Scot and Pict. Therefore Vortigern, a British king, introduced Hengist and Horsa into the land as his allies. And after coming thither Hengist made a marriage between his daughter Rowena and and the king, so that an English woman became a queen in Britain.

449.

Having once set foot in the British domains, the English people, with that tenacity which is a part of their character, prepared to stay there. They called the Britons *Welch* —which means *foreigner*—and began to treat them as if they were really interlopers and foreigners on their own lands. The Britons, no less obstinate than the English, refused to give up, and were driven, inch by inch, westward and southward into the strongholds in the mountains of Wales, and to the rocky peninsular of Cornwall. Here their language their literature and religion were fostered just as before the hated English landed in Britain. Meanwhile the English grew and spread over the island now called England, on which they had fought for their place till they were firmly established as the rightful owners of the land. And thus, by the right of conquest, the *English* people became possessors of *England.*

TALK II.

Telling How Letters and Learning First Came to England.

You will readily guess that these war-like English were not a literary people when they landed on the shores of England. The Britons, who were such savages in the eyes of the cultured Romans, were much more advanced in learning and religion than their English conquerors. Yet all the Teutonic peoples did have a system of writing in characters called Runes, which they claimed had been taught them by their god Odin or Wodin. These Runic letters were carved on stone or wood, which have been used by all ancient people before paper or parchment was discovered. Egypt wrote her hieroglyphics on stone, just as the North American Indian has cut upon the boulders of his native country the rude picture-writing which preserves the memory of his battles. Thus the Teutons had engraved their Runes, doubtless, on the stones and trees of their various dwelling-places. Our word *book* is from *boc*, the early English for beech-tree, probably because the beech was a hard wood, which could easily be used by the early book-makers. Still, with only stone and wood in place of pen, ink and paper, we cannot expect to find any works of literature among our English, when they came to their new home in Britain.

The want of pen, ink and paper, however, or even of written characters, does not prevent a people from having its poetry or history. We do not know a tribe so barbarous that they have not had among them a story-teller or minstrel—the earliest historian or poet of a people. These men repeat the traditions of the past, or the deeds of the

men around them; and these stories, rehearsed from mouth to mouth, or handed down from generation to generation, before the time of book-making, might in later times get written down, and so become the first history, or the earliest poem of a nation. The Britons had their *bards*, who sang to harps songs of war and praises of heroes. The Scandinavians had a *Sagaman* and *Scald;* the English their *scop* and *gleeman.* The chiefs honored these men, as princes honor poets. They had them at their feasts; they took them to the field of battle, and the court of these old rulers would not have been complete without its minstrel. These singers or story-tellers would keep alive the traditions of their tribes, and it is probable that they preserved from father to son the old stories which had been told among the Teutonic branch of the Aryan family, before they broke up into different tribes. For among the Germans, Scandinavians and English, there is a great likeness in some of the earliest literary remains, which most likely comes from the fact that the root-stories or myths were the same, and dated back to the time when they were one people. What is more natural than to suppose, that, when these emigrating hordes separated, each carried away the early traditions, to embellish the mover again with deeds of more recent heroes and the scenery of their new dwelling places ?

How many such myths our English forefathers brought to Britain, we do not know. It was not until long after they had been settled in their new homes that any verses of their singers were written down; and only after it is committed to writing can we fairly begin the study of literature. First, they were obliged to seek less clumsy means for the writing of poetry than the side of a flat boulder or the wood of a tree, and for characters more easily understood than the Runic letters. Let us see, then, how the use of parchment and our modern kind of letters first came into England.

It was hardly 150 years after the English had conquered

Britain that a Roman priest, passing along the streets of his city of Rome, saw some blue-eyed, handsome youths exposed for sale in the slave-market. Their beauty attracted him so much that he stopped and asked who these strangers were. "They are Angles," was the answer. "Right," said the priest, "for they have angels' faces and it becomes such to be co-heirs with the angels in heaven." A few years later, when this same Roman priest had become Pope Gregory, and was all-powerful over the Roman Empire, he remembered these English, or Angles, whose faces had so impressed him, and would not rest till he had sent Christian missionaries to England to snatch these people from heathenism. The English had received no teachings of Christianity from their conquered foes, the Britons. There were only bloody instructions on both sides, and the Britons, with pride in their superior religion, called their conquerors "heathen" and "barbarians," while the English took fierce delight in burning the religious houses and putting to death the holy men of the British. So the religion which taught peace and good will among men did not spread from one to the other people.

It was in the year 596 that the ship, sent by Pope Gregory, landed the good father Augustine, with forty monks who came with him, on the shores of Kent, in England. Ethelbert, king of Kent, heard of the coming of this little band of strange men, clad in long robes, bearing aloft a silver cross with the image of Christ painted on a board. The English monarch, not knowing what to think of men who came without weapons, feared they were magicians, and sat out under a spreading tree to receive them; because if they tried to use any evil arts of witchcraft, their spells would be less powerful in the free air. Instead of spears and battle-axes, these monks bore rolls of parchment, written all over with letters unknown to the English king. These parchments were the Bible, a book of the four Gospels, a Psaltery and a history of the Christian Martyrs.

You will see that the most important book which the Roman priests brought to England was the Old Testament. This was a sacred book of the Hebrew people, who were not related to the Teutonic peoples, from whom our English sprang. The Hebrews belong to another family of mankind—the Semitic family, and from them we derive our religion and that wonderful book, the *Old Testament*, which is made up of the writings of their sacred men, their poets and prophets. And if we believe that literature, like everything else, grows rich, the greater the number and variety of things that are added to form it, then we must fancy that it was a great good fortune to English literature to have this rare old book of the Hebrews so early brought to England.

I want you to think of the Old Testament now only as a great literary work, full of wonderful poetry and rich imagination, coming from an entirely different race, to be grafted upon the rude poetry and traditions of this our Northern people. Fancy this poetry of the south, with its odors of spices and annis and cummin, its music of sounding harp and tinkling cymbal, its visions of green pastures and still waters, all at once mingled with the songs of the gleemen who sang at barbaric feasts where warriors clothed in skins spilled mead to the memory of dead heroes, and celebrated the glories of bloody warfare. Think of the unmelodious rhythm of this English singer, blending all at once with the melody of the harpstrings that the Hebrew bard had struck by the rivers of Judea, under the glowing skies of the Orient. Picture how the kindling imagination of the Northern poet, who had hardly known the language of tenderness or love, would be inspired by such ardent strains as these, from the songs of the great Solomon:

Behold thou art fair, my love,
Behold thou art fair.
Thou hast dove's eyes within thy locks,
Thy hair is like a flock of goats
That appear from Mt. Gilead;

Thy lips are like a thread of scarlet,
And thy speech is comely.
Set me as a seal upon they heart,
As a seal upon thine arm,
For love is strong as death
And jealousy is cruel as the grave.
The coals thereof are coals of fire,
A most vehement flame.

If you are able to fancy all this, you will see what a rich flood of poetry and imagery this great book of this Eastern people added to the rude and unformed literature that was to be nursed under the cold, wintry skies of Northern Europe.

With these Hebrew books the Christian priests also brought the Roman letters which have ever since been the letters used by the English. Thus all at once upon the English soil came the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, the HEBREW LITERATURE, and the WRITTEN CHARACTERS of the ROMANS—three great gifts to the future of our English race.

TALK III.

THE BEGINNINGS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE.

IN the British Museum in London, where are collected the largest number of English books that are to be found together in one library, there is a time-stained and time-eaten manuscript known as the *Beowulf*. This manuscript is probably almost a thousand years old, although its exact age is not certain. Let everybody who speaks the English language and has a reverence for English literature look at this old manuscript with admiration. It is the oldest epic in the language, the oldest *entire* poem in our literature.

The *Beowulf* is written in the Roman letters which were introduced into England by Christianity, and is in the earliest English spoken on the islands of Britain. It has been several times translated into modern English and into

other languages, and there have been many guesses as to whence it first came, when it was written, and to what people it related. Some learned men have thought it was of German, others of Scandinavian, origin; others that the scenery and character of the poem are wholly English. We shall most likely never know all the facts about it, or anything about its unknown author. But one thing seems certain to my mind: that the traditions or story on which it is founded are far older than the hand that first wrote it. Why may not this time-encrusted old poem of Beowulf have celebrated the deeds of some Teutonic hero in a pre-historic past? When it was first written down by the old poet, a thousand years ago, he could easily have embellished an older story with incidents of his own time and the scenery of the more modern dwelling-place of the Teutons, but he could not entirely lose, in telling the story, that atmosphere of antiquity which carries us back, as we read it, to the time when western Europe was filled with fens and waste places, peopled by men living in caves and lake-dwellings, with whom the Teutons may have battled when they were wandering through Europe before they had fixed their homes on the borders of the North and Baltic seas.

But let me tell you here simply and briefly the story of the poem. Beowulf is a Chief of the Goths, a "deed-bold" warrior, the old poem calls him, accustomed all his life to war. At the opening of the poem he is going to the help of Hrothgar, a chief of the Danes, who is "old and hairless," when the poem begins. Hrothgar has built a great hall or "folkstead," in which he sits at feast with his warriors. It is probably much such a hall as that in which the ancient gleeman or scald first sang the deeds of Beowulf.

Fancy a long room, fifty by two hundred feet, with nave and side aisles formed by two rows of pillars. Down the centre of the hall is the great stone hearth on which burn huge fires of wood. Between the pillars curtains of skins or rudely woven tapestry are sometimes hung, and then they

form sleeping places for the warriors. In others of these alcoves are set great vats, from which the mead and ale are dealt out to the drinkers. On a raised dais at the upper end of the hall sits the chief with his wife, at a table placed transversely to the long tables that run lengthwise through the hall on each side the central hearth. At the chief's tables are the most favored guests or those of highest rank. The apartments of the women, when there were women in the household, were back of the dais, shut off by thick hangings. If you will read the description in Scott's *Ivanhoe* of the hall of Cedric the Saxon, you will see that it was something such a hall as this, with appliances of a more advanced civilization, in which the English chiefs held revel and council as late as the coming of their Norman conquerors. Such a hall, adorned with barbaric pomp, Hrothgar the Dane, built for himself and warriors, and called *Heorot.* There the gleemen sang, the warriors feasted, and the mead flowed in the cups, and all went happily until a "grim guest called Grendel" came up from his dismal dwelling in neighboring fens, where lurked giants, dwarfs, and all sorts of misshapen creatures, and each night seized and bore off his prey from among Hrothgar's dearest warriors; and on this account Beowulf had been summoned to subdue Grendel. He embarked, therefore, on his "wide-bosomed" ship and went to the help of the old thane, or to quote the most poetical translation of the old poem:

"Departed then o'er the wavy sea,
by wind impelled,
the floater foamy-necked
to a bird most like,
till that about one hour
of the second day
the twisted prow
had sailed,
that the voyagers
saw land;
the ocean shores shine;
mountains steep;

spacious sea-nesses;
then was the sea-sailor
at the end of his watery way."

When they had landed, the "sea-weary men" marched straight for the hall of Hrothgar. Leaning their round shields of hard wood against the wall, they entered. The Danes asked who they were and whence they came. Beowulf answered proudly that he was a chieftain, the "board-sharer of the king of the Goths." On this he was made welcome; and as soon as he was rested and refreshed he entertained them with tales of his prowess. "The women," says the old poem, "liked the Goths' proud speeches," and the wife of Hrothgar came to sit by her lord and listen.

At night Beowulf waited sleepless for the time when Grendel, the grim guest, should come to seize a fresh warrior. When he heard him enter, he rose and grappled with him. Then

"bodily pain endured
the fell wretch,
on his shoulder was
a deadly wound manifest,
the sinews sprang asunder,
the bone-casing burst."

and off went Grendel, leaving his hand and arm in the strong grasp of Beowulf. He died on his return to the watery fens, where

"was with blood
the surge boiling,
the dire swing of waves
was mingled
hot with clotted blood,
it welled with fatal gore.
Grendel had dyed it
after he joyless
in his fen-shelter,
laid down his life."

After this fight is over and Beowulf has been honored as

a victor, the giant mother of Grendel comes to avenge her son, and carries away at night Hrothgar's favorite warrior. Beowulf says consolingly to the bereaved chieftain:

> "Sorrow not, sage man;
> better 'tis for every man
> that he his friend avenge
> than that he greatly mourn;
> each of us must
> an end await
> of this world's life;
> let him who can
> work high deeds ere death."

Beowulf then goes to the watery fens and attacks the giantess on her own premises, which still reek with the gore of Grendel, and finally returns with the two heads of these giant foes. Then he rested in the great hall Heorot.

> "Rested him, the ample hearted;
> the mansion towered
> vaulted and golden-hued,
> the guest slept therein
> until the black raven,
> Heaven's delight,
> blithe of heart announced
> the bright sun coming."

At the close of the poem Beowulf returned to his home, where, as his last act of prowess, he slew a huge dragon which devastated the land, and in doing it received his death-wound. Before his death he divided among the young-warriors his shield, his war-shirt of "ringed iron," and his other weapons of war. Then his people make a great pyre, put all his riches on it and burn them with their chief's body.

This is a bare outline, with scanty extracts, from the oldest entire poem which wears the dress of our earliest English speech. If from this you have caught any of its spirit, you may be able to fancy with me that there is something Homeric about this rude epic. But it is a Homer of the

North, not of the South, who sings. A blast of the north wind seems to blow through and through these lines. The beauty and grace of Homer's heroes are not seen in this Gothic chieftain. It is the brute strength of the northern peoples that we find in him. Yet, some of the characteristics of poetry are not lacking. Night is called "the shadow-covering of creatures;" death is "the terrible life-devourer;" the door is the "hall's mouth." It speaks of "rose-covered spring," and "death-hued winter." Although generally bare of ornament and not rich in imagination, it has a few touches that are really poetical. Bare and bald as it is, I fancy you may be able to hear in it the birth-cry of our English muse, a true nursling of the northern peoples, cradled under the skies of a rugged and wintry clime.

There are a number of specimens of early English poetry which are almost as old as the Beowulf, and one or two fragments which may have been committed to writing even earlier. One such collection of poetry called the "Exeter Book," was given by some good bishop to the library of Exeter Cathedral some time in the eleventh century. Most of these poems are on religious subjects, although two or three of the most poetical in the book have an air of even greater antiquity than the Christian religion on English soil. Let me give you a few lines from one of these old poems—*The Sea-farer*—which might have been sung by some old viking in the earliest times that the ships of the Northmen sailed the seas. He begins—

I of myself can
a true tale relate,
my fortunes recount;
how I in days of toil
a time of hardship,
oft suffered
bitter breast-cares,
have endured
proved in the ship
strange mishaps many
The fell rolling of the waves
has me oft drenched;
an anxious night-watch
at the vessel's prow
when on the cliff it strikes.
Pierced with cold
were my feet
bound with frost
with cold bonds.
There cares sighed

hot round my heart
hunger tore me within;
the sea-wolf's rage;
that the man knows not
to whom on land
all falls out
most joyfully;
how I miserable and sad
on the ice-cold sea
a winter passed
with exile traces.
Of dear kindred bereft,
hung o'er with icicles,
the hail in showers flew;
where I heard naught
save the sea roaring,
the ice-cold wave.

Note the atmosphere of this old poem; the icy coldness, which almost makes one shiver in reading it, and you will feel that the unknown poet knew something of the poetic art.

TALK IV.

On the Form of Early English Poetry, and the Old Poem of Cædmon.

Before going further, I want you to glance at the construction of this early poetry, and to note in what way it differs from the poetry of other peoples. Its most marked difference is its *alliteration* or the use of the same initial letter to begin a certain number of words in a line of poetry. The verses were written like prose; for a long time they were not supposed to be any attempt at poetical form, as there was no use of capital letters at the beginning of lines. There was however a little mark like a colon or semicolon, dividing the poem into lines, and these lines consisted usually of two important and two unimportant syllables. Of such a pair of lines the two most important words of the first, and the most important of the second had the same initial, thus:

The *g*rim *g*uest,
*G*rendal hight.

An un*W*insome *W*ood,
*w*ater stood under it.

The Water *W*elled blood,
The *W*arriors gazed
on the *H*ot *H*eart's blood,
while the *H*orn rung
a *d*oleful *d*eath-note."

This system of alliteration was used by the Scandinavians as well as the English, and is the distinguishing mark of the poetry of the North. Probably this use of consonant initials was as natural to this northern peoples as the music of rhythm and the jingle of rhyme were to the nations of the south of Europe, where the language was so rich in vowels and so soft in sound. Certainly the use of a recurring consonant seems natural to the poets of the North, and we shall see that alliteration is much used by poets in later English, and that it often crops out in our poetry even at the present day.

The first noted poetical outcome of the English muse after the land was Christianized, was the work of *Cædmon*, of whom very little is known, except that he lived near the convent of Whitby, which was presided over by the Abbess Hilda—one of that long line of saintly women who are found in the early annals of the Christian Church.

This Cædmon, according to the earliest account, was present at some convivial party, where it was the custom, as from the earliest times among all Teutonic peoples, to sing or recite, while the others feasted, and each was called upon in turn to perform his part. But when it came to him to sing, Cædmon got up and went out, he was so ashamed of his ignorance. Going out into the stable among the cattle, the care of which was that night committed to him, he fell asleep there. In his dream he heard a voice saying, "Cædmon, sing to me." He answered, "thou knowest I cannot sing." Then the voice replied, "However you *shall* sing." "What shall I sing?" asked Cædmon, meekly. "Sing thou the beginning of created things." And on this he began to praise God in verse and to utter a long poem in his dream. On waking he was still inspired by the influence he had felt

in his sleep, and continued to sing the Creation, the Fall of man, and the whole story of Paradise Lost. Taken before the Abbess Hilda, she persuaded him to enter the monastery, and he lived and died there in great holiness, leaving as his work this first English epic which Christianity inspired in England.

The poem opens with a description of the revolt of Lucifer in Heaven, the Creation, The Temptation and Fall, and goes on through nearly all the dramatic incidents of the Old Testament. Here are the lines that follow the account of Satan's conspiracy and rebellion:

"Then was God angry,
and wroth with that host,
whom he erst had honored
with beauty and glory
he formed for these false ones,
an exile home,
anguish for reward,
the groans of hell,
hard punishment;
bade their torture house
await the victims."

Then after he has banished Lucifer and his rebels, God creates the earth and man to re-people the sky, empty of the angels he has banished to hell. Of the earth the old poem says:

"There had not here as yet
save cavern shade
aught been;
but this wide abyss
stood deep and dim,
strange to its Lord,
idle and useless."

Satan's speech of discontent has a shadowy likeness to Milton's Satan.

"Why shall I toil," said he.
"to me it is no whit needful
to have a superior.
I can with my hands

as many wonders work;
I have great power to form
a diviner home,
higher in heaven.
why shall I to his favor serve?
bend to him in such vassalage?
I may be a god as he.
Stand by me, strong associates,
who will not fail me in this strife.
Heroes strong in mood,
who have chosen me for chief,
Renowned warriors!
I may be their chieftain,
sway in this realm.
to me it seemeth not right
that I need cringe in aught
to God for any good.
I will no longer be his vassal."

The following lines are from the description of the deluge:

"The Lord sent
rain from heaven,
and also empty let
the well brooks
through on the world,
from every vein
the torrent streams,
dark-sounded;
the sea rose
o'er their shore-walls.
Stern and strong was he
who o'er the waters swayed,
covered and overwhelmed
the sinful sons
of middle earth
with the dark waves."

Cædmon flourished in the seventh century, somewhere in the period from 657 to 680. His successors were a line of worthy monks, who for centuries kept alive in monasteries the faint flame of learning and literature. In the early part of the eighteenth century appeared the first English biography, that of Bishop Wilfrid, who

700–710.

built the great York Cathedral, written by his pious chaplain, Eddius; about this time, too, came the first autobiography known in our literature, written by Bishop Egwin. Text books in the various sciences began to appear. Adhelm, a learned monk of the seventh century, was both a musician and poet, and assumed the garb and character of a gleeman, singing his verses in English, that it might thus attract and teach the people. Unfortunately for a very long time the language of books and of learning was the Latin, and the good every-day speech of our forefathers, the homely English, was crowded out of use. This was partly because the English was not much esteemed, and partly because Latin was the language of scholars all over Europe, and being thus a universal tongue, was the most convenient one for authors. But it was a misfortune for the English language and literature that a foreign speech should for centuries have held such an sway over the speech of the people.

TALK V.

Telling of the Venerable Beda and King Alfred the Good, and the Work They Did in Literature.

Beda, a good and pious priest whose epitaph gave him the name of "The Venerable Beda," comes next to Cædmon as one of the great writers of this early time. Like the rest of his learned brethren, he wrote almost wholly in Latin. His best known work is a church history of England. He wrote also text-books on natural philosophy, grammar, astronomy, music, and many other branches which would be very amusing in this age of new-fashioned school-books and modern discoveries. All these were in Latin, but in his last days he began the translation of the gospels into English, and died just as he finished dicta-

Born 673
Died 735.

ting the translation of St. John's gospel. There is a beautiful account of his death by his favorite scholar, Cuthbert, who wrote down from his master's dictation this English version of the Testament. As they drew near the last chapters of John, Beda ordered Cuthbert to write with all speed, but his breath came so painfully that the good old priest had to pause frequently in his dictation. As the day drew near its close the writer said, "Most dear master, there is yet one chapter wanting; do you think it troublesome to to be asked any more questions?" He answered: "It is no trouble; take the pen, make ready and write *fast*." In the evening Cuthbert said: "Dear master, there is yet one sentence unwritten." Beda said: "Write it quickly." Soon after the boy said: "It is written." "It is well," answered Beda, and sitting upright on the floor of his cell, he breathed his last breath in a song of rejoicing.

Born 849; Died 901.

A little more than a century after the death of Beda, Alfred the Great was born, one of the best and noblest of English Kings, who for the work he did in literature alone, deserves a high place in our remembrance. He did all he could to make the spoken language of England also its written language, when no one but a king could so easily have set the fashion of putting literature into an unfashionable garb, and so have drawn others into following it.

It is said that Alfred could not read at the age of twelve, but that his step-mother one day showed him and his brother a book of poetry, saying, "Whichever of you shall soonest learn this volume shall have it for his own." Attracted by the beautiful colored letters, Alfred mastered the book, and so his love for literature began. When he became king, although his hands were always full of work, to say nothing of wars constantly carried on against him by the Danes, he still made book-making one of his pursuits, and kept several literary men in his court carrying out his plans, and aiding him in his writing. An account of a voyage along the coast of Norway, and another from Denmark through the Baltic

Sea, which Alfred wrote down from the lips of the narrators, were the earliest voyages written in English. One of the most famous works of Alfred was the translation of *The Consolations of Philosophy*, a book written by the Latin writer Boethius when he was shut up in prison. It is a series of conversations between the *Mind*, cast down by imprisonment, and *Wisdom* who plays the consoler, and in doing so utters many wise maxims that are as good to read to-day as ever they were. In this translation are many fables which Alfred has told in the simplest words, as we should tell a story to a little child, which proves that Alfred hit on the true way of interesting the childlike and uncultured people. This is the way he tells the story of Orpheus and Eurydice:

"Happy is the man who can behold the clear fount of the highest good, and can put away from himself the darkness of his mind. We will now from old fables relate a story. It happened formerly that there was a harper in a country called Thrace, which was in Greece. This harper was inconceivably good. His name was Orpheus. He had a very excellent wife whose name was Eurydice. Then began men to say concerning the harper, that he could harp so that the wood moved, the stones stirred themselves at the sound, and wild beasts would run thereto and stand as if they were tame; so still that though men or hounds pursued them they shunned them not. Then said they that the harper's wife should die, and her soul should be led to hell. Then should the harper become so sorrowful that he could not remain among men, but frequented the wood, and sat on the mountains, both day and night, weeping and harping so that the woods shook and the rivers stood still, and no hart shunned any lion and no hare any hound, nor did the cattle know any hatred or fear of others for pleasure of the sound. Then it seemed to the harper that nothing in the world pleased him. Then thought he, that he would seek the gods of hell and endeavor to allure them with his harp, and pray that they would give him back his wife. When he came thither then there should come to him the dog of hell, whose name was Cerberus; he should have three heads, and began to wag his tail and play with him for his harping. Then he went farther, until he met the fierce goddesses whom the common people call Parcæ, of whom they say that they have no respect for any man, but punish every man according to his deeds. Then began he to implore their mercy. Then began they to

weep with him. Then went he further, and all the inhabitants of hell ran to him, and led him to their king; and all began to speak for him, and to pray that which he prayed. And all the punishments of hell were suspended while he harped before the king. When he long and long had harped, then spoke the king of the inhabitants of hell, and said: "Let us give this man his wife, for he has earned her by his harping." He then commanded him that he should well observe that he never looked backward after he departed thence, and said if he looked backwards he should lose the woman. But men can with great difficulty, if at all, restrain Love! Well-a-way! What! Orpheus led his wife till he came to the boundary of light and darkness. When he came forth into the light, then looked he behind his back towards the woman. Then was she immediately lost to him. This fable teaches every man who desires to fly the darkness of hell and to come to the light of the true good, that he look not about him to his old vices."

By such stories, so simply told, and by many translations from the Scriptures and other great books, did Alfred seek to educate his subjects.

There were, however, many influences hostile to literary work in his reign. But no matter what disturbances went on outside, within the quiet convent walls the monks wrote and copied the books which keep the thread of history through that past time. It was the habit in both British and English monasteries to keep the record of all the events of the year in a chronicle, the form of which was modeled upon the Hebrew chronicles. Every year the monks of different religious houses would meet and compare these annals, and then form a general record. One of the oldest of these, known as the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle," was edited by Alfred and his scribes, and is valuable as history.

Alfred died just on the brink of the tenth century. After him there is no very great name for many years. There are men of learning and a few unknown poets, but little has come down to us in English, or of English origin. The invasions of the Danes interrupted literary labor, and early in the eleventh century the Danes conquered

1017. England, and King Cnut, or Canute, took the throne. But the great event in English history in this eleventh

century which had an effect on language and literature, was the *Norman Conquest* of which I shall tell you in the next talk.

TALK VI.

TELLING HOW WILLIAM THE NORMAN CAME TO THE CONQUEST OF ENGLAND.

I have already told you briefly about the invasions of the Danes who for so many years were attempting the conquest of England. You can guess something of their power and activity from the fact that they placed a king on the throne in the early part of the eleventh century. Remember that these Danes, with Swedes and Norwegians, made the Scandinavian division of the Teutonic peoples, and that they are thus close cousins by race to the English. In the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries, these Scandinavians showed such a wonderful spirit of adventure, and their deeds had so great an effect on history, and hence on literature, that I cannot make my story complete without giving a brief sketch of them.

In spreading out from Denmark to Sweden and Norway, the Scandinavians (whom I will hereafter call by their shorter name of Northmen) had become, by force of their position on peninsulas girt about by Northern seas, the most daring sailors in the world. In the year 876 a party of these Northmen, coming principally from Denmark, but swelling their number as they went along with a mixture of Jutes and Angles, who joined them readily in this maurading march, went to invade France. Led by a famous Danish chieftain, Rolf, also called Rou and Rollo, they sailed up the river Seine, devastating the country all along its borders, and prepared to besiege Paris. The French made treaties with these powerful invaders, gave Rolf a princess of royal

blood to wife, induced him to be baptized a Christian, and gave him a tract of land on the borders of the English channel, since called Normandy, from these Northmen, or Normans. They spread over their new home, marrying with the natives, increasing rapidly in population, and adopting the language of the people among whom they lived. In a century they had almost forgotten whence they came and the language they spoke at their coming, using wholly the *Romance* tongue, which afterwards became the modern French.

Meanwhile the Danes, pressing on England, had put King Cnut in power. He seems to have been a good king, who made fair laws for those days. He was something of a poet, too, and a little song of his is still preserved which he made one day as he was going down the river Ouse in a boat, and heard from the open windows of the monastery the Monks singing their hymns.

> "Merrily sang the monkes in Ely,
> When Cnut the king rowed by;
> Row knightes, near the land
> And hear ye the monkes' song."

When Cnut got the throne, the English king, whose unfortunate name in history is *Ethelred the Unready*, fled to Normandy, where the descendants of Rolf were flourishing. Probably the reason he went there was because his wife, Queen Emma, was a Norman woman, a great-grand-daughter of the famous Rolf. And the son of this unfortunate Ethelred and Emma, the gracious young prince Edward, exiled from his English home during the reign of Cnut, spent all his youth in the Norman court, spoke its language, and took on the manners and polish of its best society—esteemed in those days a very polished and elegant society indeed. For you must understand that the rough Normans who came to Northern France one hundred and fifty years before the time of Prince Edward, had been wonderfully improved during this lapse of time. The French among whom they set-

tled had imparted to them their civilization. Southern Europe, especially Italy, had sent to them pious pilgrims, who carried learning and religion to foreign lands. These wandering scholars had been hospitably received in Normandy, and one of them, the celebrated Lanfranc, had established a school there, which became one of the most famous in Europe.

Another people, who greatly aided in the spread of learning in Europe, were the Arabs, who had overrun Italy, conquered a large part of Spain, and made incursions into France during the century before Rolf came to Normandy. These Arabs were far in advance of the Europeans in all kinds of knowledge. They had instituted splendid libraries in Spain, had opened schools there, and their systems of teaching had an influence all over Europe. These Arabians, too, were great story-tellers—the Arabian Nights' Entertainment bears testimony to that—and they were also musical poets. When the Norman troops, following their taste for adventure, went into Southern Europe to help the Italians in battle against these Arabs, they must, even in so rough a meeting, have imbibed some of the culture of their foes. And in the mingling of all these influences which had touched him on all sides, it is certain that the Norman, who was always hospitable to new ideas, and held fast to all that came to him, either of an intellectual or a material kind, must have been very much improved and polished. So when young Prince Edward, son of Ethelred and Emma, and consequently descended on one side from Alfred the Great, and on the other from Rolf the Dane, was made King of England, after the death of Cnut and his sons, he took back to the English court the language and the manners in which he had been bred in the Norman court.

With this Edward—known as *Edward the Confessor*—the first Norman influence came to England, although it was not Edward who fixed and confirmed it there. It was a much

greater and stronger man than Edward the Confessor—no other than the great Duke of Normandy, whom we know best as William the Conqueror. William claimed that Edward had promised that his successor on the English throne should be the Norman duke, and the story is also told that William had extorted an unwilling promise from Harold, King Edward's brother-in-law, that he would favor the Norman claim. As soon as Edward the Confessor died, however, *Harold* took the throne. But Duke William was on the alert to urge his claim. A man like a lion was this William of Normandy; so strong and so brave that we can but admire him. In a very few months after Edward's death he had crossed the English channel with his troops, beaten the army of Harold in the battle of Hastings, in which Harold was slain and had made himself the crowned king of England —the first of a powerful line of Norman kings. This Norman victory had an influence on literature which ranks as an event second in succession and importance to the coming of Augustine and his monks with their parchments of the Hebrew Scriptures.

As the troops of William the Conqueror spurred to battle upon the field of Hastings, the king's minstrel, Taillefer, who could fight all the better doubtless because he could sing, made the English welkin ring with the strains of the *Chanson de Roland*, which celebrated the deeds of Charlemagne's heroes against Arabian foes. As the song rang gaily from the minstrel's lips, the arrow of a foeman silenced him forever. In this musical war-cry, so suddenly hushed in death, the new literary influence first made itself heard in England.

1066.

TALK VII.

On Literature Under the Normans, Especially in the Reign of Henry II; and the Legends of Arthur and His Knights of the Round Table.

Notwithstanding the pious labors of monks, beginning with the venerable Beda, there were very few books in England at the time of the Norman conquest, or indeed for years after. When the Norman came to France he brought with him little that could be called literature. *Romance*, the spoken language of Normandy, was hardly a written language in William's time. However, the fact that a language is not a written language does not prevent the making of songs in the vulgar tongue or the singing of them by the people's minstrels. It was not long after the coming of the Normans to England before all sorts of minstrels swarmed in France and Germany. Trouveres, troubadours, jongleurs, minnesingers—all singing like the lark, until France, and especially the south of France, was like a sky full of birds. Thus, although the Norman did not bring many books when he came to England, he brought an impetus to poetry, and the form in which to clothe it. You will recognize that the spirit inherent in these descendants of the Northmen was akin to that which had inspired the heroic lines of Beowulf, acted upon by the refining forces it had met in France and southern Europe. But this spirit had now taken upon itself a new form. The verses, without rhyme or rhythmic grace, in which the Teutonic gleeman had sung the high deeds of his fathers, were not heard among Norman singers. Poetry put itself into melodious numbers, and the soft consonances

of rhyme took the place of the old-fashioned alliteration of the earliest age of English poetry.

It is to the credit of the Norman kings that they were always favorable to learning. William the Conqueror—although his reign was busy with the broils and intrigues which engaged a king struggling to keep his hold on a new kingdom—was never deaf to the claim of letters. As soon as he was fairly at home in England, he brought over the good Lanfranc, the Italian scholar who had founded the famous school in Normandy, and made him Archbishop of Canterbury. William's son, Henry I, bore the sirname of *Beauclerc*, "Fine Scholar," and there were few princes of Norman line in England who did not feel, or pretend to feel, an interest in literature.

1066 to 1087.

The history of England was still kept up in Latin. The first great successor of Beda and Alfred in this field was Ordericus Vitalis, who brought English history down to the year 1141; following him came William of Malmesbury, who told the story of the English from their landing in Britain to the reign of King Stephen de Blois, and then came Henry of Huntingdon, who ended his work about the time Henry the II came to the throne.

In the reign of Henry the II literature took a great stride forward. There were many events that helped to this. The king himself was a patron of literary men, and his queen, Eleanor, had come from the very home and birthplace of the Troubadours, and could herself make songs such as the singers of that day sang to their gay lutes. There had been two crusades to the Holy Sepulchre, and the united armies of Europe had brought back from the east many refinements of taste and many poetical ideas new to them. The system of Chivalry, which did much to polish manners, was the ruling force in society, and it was this spirit that found expression in the lays of the Troubadour and exalted the office of the singer, till knights and princes were proud to be called verse-makers. With these influences to foster

1154 to 1189.

literature it is not surprising that a number of remarkable names should appear in England in this reign.

Among the first of these names is that of Geoffrey of Monmouth, who was not English, but Welsh, and belonged to the old British nation, so long since driven to Wales by the English advance into British territory. These Britons had imparted very little to their English conquerors, although, as I have told you previously, they had a literature of which they were justly proud. There are still remaining some manuscripts in the Kymric tongue older than any in the English.

The Welsh felt less bitterness against the Norman than his ancestors had felt against the English, and the tendency of Norman rule had been to break down the barriers which kept all knowledge of British history and poetry out of England, and thus to bring a fresh element into our literature. In 1147 this Geoffrey of Monmouth, who was a priest living under the patronage of the English court, wrote a history of his people which is very interesting indeed. Geoffrey says he was not the author of this book, but that it was a translation out of the ancient Kymric tongue, which he, like all true Britons, could read and speak, and that it was one of the old books which the Welsh had carried over to Brittany, when some of them fled there after the English invaded England. This book is very interesting to us because in it we find the history of the famous King Arthur and his prophet Merlin, and an account of how the order of *Knights of the Round Table* was founded.

The history begins by telling us that the race of Britons began with Brutus, a great grandson of Æneas of Troy, who after the manner of his famous grandsire, took his household gods and went to found a city in the island of Albion. After slaying a number of giants he found there, the chief of whom was *Gogmagog*, Brutus built the city of Troynovant (New Troy) which is now London, and began the race of the Britons. From him in lineal order came King Arthur, greatest and best of British kings.

There is now-a-days a great deal of doubt about the reality of King Arthur, and most people regard him merely as a myth of the old historians, or the later poets. But although we may be sure that the story about Brutus, and, indeed, most of the accounts of Arthur, are untrue, still I do not see why there may not once have been a noble king among the Britons, called Arthur, who ruled wisely and well; nor why some of the deeds told by Geoffrey may not have been founded on fact. At any rate Geoffrey was for years believed in as an undoubted historian, and from his time Arthur, and Merlin, and *The Knights of the Table Round*, began to figure largely in literature, even to the present day, where we find them in so many of the modern poets.

Two other remarkable men of Henry II's time were also Welsh by birth, Walter Map, and Gerald de Barri. They were both priests, as were most literary men in these early days, but Map was a shrewd, outspoken man, and a clever writer, who did not let his office blind his judgment, and he had a very sharp pen to use against the abuses of the church. Some of the songs which were called "songs of Walter Map," are the first protests in England against religious corruption, which we shall see wax strong in the time of Wycliffe and the reformers, two hundred years later. Map also wrote a sort of court journal which gives us little peeps into that old time, showing it as if the people in it were still alive. But his great work in literature was his addition to the Romances of the Round Table, which had now begun to be current in Europe and to draw to them other romances, which Brittany, a country so rich in fiction, was ready to add to the story of her favorite King Arthur. The characters of Lancelot du Lac, Tristram and Isoud, Gallahad, the Quest for the Holy Grail, and many other incidents, which religion and chivalry had interwoven with the original legends of Arthur and his knights, were spreading over Europe. It was natural that Walter Map, himself of Kymric race, should have found delight in the

story of the British Arthur. He bound in one the scattered stories, bringing them together on English soil and making them absolutely the property of English literature. Walter Map was preceded by two trouveres, one of whom, Geoffrey Gaimar, put the History of Geoffrey of Monmouth into metre, calling it "Estorie des Engles," and the other named Wace, who also wrote the same history in verse, in a much better fashion, and presented it, when done, to Queen Eleanor. And from the time of these three—Map, Gaimar and Wace, to that of Alfred Tennyson, the names of Arthur and his knights are familiar to all readers of English poetry. A literary contemporary of Map, Gerald de Barri (also known as Giraldus Cambrensis, or Gerald of Wales), seems to have been a bright, witty fellow, who, although he wrote in Latin, wrote in an easy, popular vein, like one who uses his spoken language. He himself said, "Since words only give expression to what is in the mind, and man is endowed with the gift of speech only for the purpose of uttering his thoughts, what can be greater folly than to lock up and conceal things we wish to be clearly understood in a tissue of unintelligible phrases and sentences. Is it not better, as Seneca says, to be dumb, than to speak so as not to be understood?" But alas, for us who would like to read Gerald in his native tongue, he, as well as all the other writers, except the trouveres of whom I have just spoken, wrote in Latin, and the 13th century opens before we hear any great utterance in English speech after the time the Normans set foot in England.

TALK VIII.

ON THE STRUGGLES OF THE ENGLISH SPEECH TO HOLD ITS OWN AGAINST THE NORMAN—OF OLD BALLADS, ESPECIALLY THE ROBIN HOOD BALLADS—THE OLD GESTE OF ROBIN HOOD AND GUY OF GISBORNE.

ALL this time you may imagine how our sturdy English speech was struggling to keep from being entirely driven out of the land by more fashionable rivals. The language of the church and of letters was Latin; that of the court, the troubadours and the trouveres, was Norman-French. Yet the common people held stoutly to their mother tongue. In those parts where the conquerors were most thickly settled it was often crowded to the wall; but in provinces more remote, where the Norman had not made his way, the English language was fairly spoken. It was not easy to uproot from the land the grand old speech brought to England by our forefathers. It was one of the grievances of the Englishman that his speech was neglected for the more fashionable Norman. You remember, if you have read Ivanhoe,* what Wamba, the witless, says to Gurth, the swineherd, as they are watching the swine.

"What call you those grunting beasts running about on their four legs?" asked Wamba.

"Swine, fool, swine," said Gurth; "every fool knows that."

"And swine is good Saxon," said Wamba, "but how call you the sow when she is flayed, and drawn and quartered, and hung up by the heels, like a traitor?"

"Pork," answered the swineherd.

"I am glad every fool knows that, too," said Wamba,

* One of the Waverley Novels, by Walter Scott.

"and pork, I think, is good Norman-French, and so, when the brute lives, and is in charge of a Saxon slave, she goes by her Saxon name; but becomes a Norman, and is called *pork* when it is carried to the castle hall to feast the nobles; what does thou think of this, Gurth, ha?"

"It is but too true, Wamba, however it got into thy fool's pate."

"Nay, I can tell you more," continued Wamba, "there is old alderman Ox continues to hold his Saxon epithet while he is under the charge of serf and bondmen, but becomes *Beef*, a fiery French gallant, when he arrives before the worshipful jaws that are destined to consume him. Mynheer Calf, too, becomes *Monsieur de Veau* in like manner; he is Saxon when he requires tendance, and takes a Norman name when he becomes matter of enjoyment."

Yet we must not be ungrateful to the Normans, for they brought into the language many words that are valuable, and many which we could hardly do without.

One way in which the speech of the people was preserved was by means of the old ballads, sung among them by native minstrels. These were true English songs, composed by untaught poets, many of whom, doubtless, were unable to write at all. To this class of old ballads belong those relating to Robin Hood, which were the literary offspring of the struggle between Norman and English. The strife for land-ownership, which drove the English from field and dwelling-place, sometimes forced him into the forest and highway, where, outlawed from his own lands, he thought it only fair to take back what he could from his rich oppressor. Such an outlaw was Robin Hood, who, if we may believe anything that is told of him, was an Englishman of noble birth, living in the early thirteenth century. Upon his bold deeds, sympathized with by the English, the famous Robin Hood ballads were founded.

You can fancy how such a rude ballad, sung in their own spoken tongue, in the north of England, must have moved

the people's hearts, and kept alive their love for their language and nationality. Most of these old ballads have been changed, no doubt, by being put into print; but some of them have kept the spirit of the time which produced them. Here is one of the oldest of these ballads, although we cannot be sure of the date of its composition. Probably the earliest that has come down to us did not find its way into manuscript before the fifteenth century. This is the ballad of *Robin Hood* and *Guy of Gisbourne:*

When woods are sheen and swards full fair,
  And leaves both large and long,
It is merry walking in the fair forest
  To hear the small bird's song.

The thrush he sang and would not cease,
  Sitting upon the spray,
So loud he wakened Robin Hood
  In the green wood where he lay.

"Now, by my faith," said jolly Robin,
  "A dream I had this night.
I dreamed me of two lusty yeomen,
  That fast with me can fight.

"Me thought they did me beat and bind,
  And took my bow me fro'.
If I be Robin alive in this land,
  I'll avenge me on them two."

"Dreams are swift," said little John,
  "As the wind blows over the hill;
For if it be never so loud this night,
  To-morrow it may be still."

"Busk ye, bowne ye,* my merry men all,
  And John shall go with me,
For I'll go seek that lusty yeoman,
  Under the greenwood tree."

Then they cast on their gowns of green,
  And took their bows each one;
And they away to the green forest
  A shooting forth are gone.

*Dress, and get ready.

Until they came to the merry greenwood,
  Where they had gladdest be,
Then were they aware of a lusty yeoman,
  His body leaned to a tree.

A sword and dagger he wore by his side,
  Of many a man the bane,
And he was clad in a capull-hide,*
  Top, and tail and mane.

"Stand you still, master," quoth Little John,
  "Under this tree so green,
And I will go to yonder yeoman
  To know what he doth mean."

"Ah, John; by me thou settest no store,
  And that I wonder to find;
How oft' send I my men before,
  And tarry myself behind.

"It is no cunning a knave to know,
  If a man but hear him speak;
And were it not for bursting bow,
  John, I thy head would break."

As often words they breeden bale,†
  So they parted, Robin and John.
And John is gone to Barnesdale,
  The ways he knoweth each one.

* * * * *

Let us leave talking of Little John,
  And think of Robin Hood,
How he is gone to the lusty yeoman,
  Where under the leaves he stood.

"Good morrow, good fellow," said Robin so fair,
  "Good morrow, good fellow," quoth he,
"Methinks by the bow thou bearest in thy hand,
  A good archer thou shouldst be."

"I am wandering from my way," quoth the yeoman,
  "And of my morning tide."
"I'll lead thee thro' the wood," said Robin,
  "Good fellow, I'll be thy guide."

"I seek an outlaw," the stranger said,

* Horse-hide.
† Breed mischief or ill-feeling.

"Men call him Robin Hood,
Rather I'd meet with that proud outlaw
Than forty pound so good."

"Now come with me, thou lusty yoeman,
And Robin thou soon shall see.
But first, let us some pastime find,
Under the greenwood tree."

"First let us make a trial of skill,
Among the woods so even.
We may chance to meet with Robin Hood,
Here at some unsett steven."*

They cut them down two summer shrubs,
That both grew under a briar,
And set them three score roods apart,
To shoot the marks just there.

"Lead on, good fellow," quoth Robin Hood,
"Lead on, I do bid thee."
"Nay, by my faith, good fellow," he said,
"My leader thou shalt be."

The first time Robin shot at the wand
He missed by an inch it fro.'
The yeoman, he was an archer good,
But he never could shoot so.

The second shot had the lu ty yeoman;
He shot within the garland,†
But Robin shot far better than that,
For he clave the willow-wand.

"A blessing upon thy heart," he said,
"Good fellow, thy shooting is good,
For, an' thy heart be as good as thy hand,
Thou art better than Robin Hood.

Now tell me thy name, good fellow," said he,
"Under the leaves of lime."
"Nay, by my faith," quoth bold Robin,
"Till thou hast told me thine."

"I dwell by dale and down," quoth he,
"And Robin to take I'm sworn,

* A time not set, or unexpectedly.
† The circle of the target. Very likely, Robin made a twisted garland of twigs for the outer circle of the target, and set the upright wand for the centre.

And when I'm called by my right name,
  I'm Guy of good Gisborne."

"My dwelling is in this wood," says Robin.
  "By thee I set right nought.
I am Robin Hood of Barnesdale,
  Whom thou so long hast sought."

He that to neither were kith or kin
  Might have seen a full fair sight,
To see how together these yeomen went,
  With blades both brown and bright.

To see how these yeomen together they fought,
  Two hours of a summer's day.
Yet neither Sir Guy nor Robin Hood
  Them settled to fly away.

Robin was reckless on a root,
  And stumbled at that tide,
And Guy was quick and nimble withal,
  And hit him o'er the left side.

"Ah! dear Lady," said Robin Hood,
  "That art both mother and may,*
I think it was ne'er man's destiny
  To die before his day."

Robin thought on Our Lady dear,
  And soon leaped up again,
And strait he came, with a backward stroke,
  And he Sir Guy had slain.

He took Sir Guy's head by the hair
  And sticked it on his bow's end.
"Thou hast been a traitor all thy life,
  Which thing must have an end."

* * * * *

Robin did off his gown of green,
  And on Sir Guy did it throw,
And he put on that capull-hide
  That clad him top to toe.

"The bows, the arrows, and little horn,
  Now with me I will bear,
And I will away to Barnesdale
  To see how my men do fare."

* Maid.

TALK IX.

How the English Language finally came to its own again, and what Books and Authors helped to keep it alive in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries.

The man to whom our thanks are due for the first great book written in English, after the death of the good King Alfred, is a priest named Layamon, who dwelt near his church at Earnely, on the banks of the Severn. He tells us in his quaint way that it became his chief thought "that he would of England tell the noble deeds, what the men were named, and whence they came, who English land first held." So he went on a journey to find three books which were his inspiration. When he brought them home, he tells us how he took them, and turning over the leaves "*beheld them lovingly*, pen he took in fingers and wrote a book-skin, the true words set together, and these three books compressed into one."

Every one who loves books will feel his heart throb in sympathy with this old student who thus lovingly handled his newly acquired treasures, the three old books which were the models for his own work. Layamon's book is called "*Brut*," and like Geoffrey of Monmouth's old history, it takes up the line of British kings from Brutus; tells the story of King Arthur and the Round Table; of King Lear and his ungrateful daughters; and many other interesting old stories, since used by poets. But the most interesting fact to us about Layamon's *Brut* is, that when the fashionable language of England was Norman-French, this book of Layamon, in thirty-two thousand lines, had only fifty-two Norman words, the rest was pure English.

Layamon's *Brut* appeared early in the thirteenth century. Two other books, of about the same date, also helped to keep alive the English language, although they did not amount to much as literature. One of these, called the *Ormulum*, was written by a pious brother of the church, named Ormin, who put bible texts and passages of the church service into English verse, probably because the common people could better keep the sacred lines in their memories if they were written in rhythm and in their spoken language. Another book of this period, written in English, was the Ancren Riwle, or Rule for Anchoresses, written by a bishop for three good ladies who with their domestics had decided to lead the life of recluses. The book sets forth, minutely, all rules for daily living, and the contents include rules for the management of the five senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, etc., as well as rules for all domestic matters.

In the rules on *seeing*, the good bishop says: "Wherefore, my dear sisters, love your windows as little as possible. See that they be small, the parlor or front windows narrowest and smallest. See that your parlor windows be always fast on every side, and likewise well shut; and mind your eyes there, lest your heart escape and go out like David's, and your soul fall sick as soon as it is out." Reticence in speech is strongly praised, since the Virgin Mary was a silent woman, who spoke rarely. In respect to the sense of *smell*, patience in bad smells is urged. "In Heaven," says the bishop, "they shall smell celestial odors who in this life have endured stench and rank smells of sweat from iron, or haircloth which they wore, or sweaty garments, or foul air in houses." All of which seems to modern ears like an encouragement to the good ladies to do without much washing, and to ignore the idea that has since gained ground that cleanliness is very near to godliness.

Although these books helped to preserve our English speech in ears that hated the Norman, yet it was not easy for writers of that time to accept the English as the language of literature. Those who wrote for posterity wanted a more

stable language than that of a court which shifted from English to Norman and back again. Thus the great history writers of the thirteenth century, Roger of Wendover, and Matthew of Paris, wrote in Latin; so did the greatest philosopher and scientist of his time, Roger Bacon, a most wonderful man, who has the credit of having invented gunpowder, although that would have been a small affair of an invention for a man who made so much greater discoveries in science and philosophy.

Near the close of the thirteenth century Robert of Gloucester wrote a rhyming history of England in his native tongue, in which he began with the British line of kings with *Brut*, and came down to Edward I. A little later than this Robert, came another Robert, Robert Manning of Brunne, who wrote a history in rhyme, and also a *Manuel of Sins*, in which the seven deadly sins are moralized upon at length. He was a true patriot, and tells us he means to write in plain words, and that he "speaks no straunge Inglyss." He also writes with moral purpose, and tells his women readers not to paint their faces to make them fairer than they are by nature, and not to go about with long trailing gowns, on whose tails the devil will ride gaily.

Robert of Brunne wrote in the opening of the fourteenth century, a century which witnessed the final triumph of English, and saw it made from thenceforth the rightful speech of England. It was in the reign of Edward III that this triumph came, although a century earlier, Henry III, when he came to be king, had issued a proclamation to the English in their own language. It was indeed high time for English kings to take up the language they had lived in, for Normandy was no more a possession of England; it was lost to the crown by King John Lackland, and had become altogether an alien land. It was, therefore, good policy as well as good sense for the kings of England to restore the neglected speech of their country. But it was not until the language of France was the speech of their

1327-1377.

enemies that English king and people united to crush it in England. When the stout yeomen among whom King Edward the III, and his brave son, the Black Prince, fought at Cressy, had beaten France in two great battles, 1346. both king and people willed that the language of their foes should never more be the language of England, and a royal decree declared the speech of the land was henceforth English.

But before this, stronger powers than a king's edict had been at work in literature. It was a fortunate day for language and for poetry when GEOFFREY CHAUCER was born. He and a group of noble contemporaries had more power to make the English language current than all the decrees of a long line of kings. To them, and to the people, who heard them gladly, we owe the great revival of the original speech of our forefathers.

PART II.

FROM CHAUCER TO SPENSER.

1400 TO 1606.

TALK X.

Telling of some of the Men who Wrote in Chaucer's Time; and of the Vision of Piers Ploughman.

I think we have now an idea of the way in which literature began in England, and of its struggles to be heard in the language native to the people, from the coming of the English to the islands of Britain, down to the reign of Edward III. In this reign appeared a group of writers who firmly established the language in literature. 1327 to 1377 These men are Geoffrey Chaucer, John Wycliffe, John Mandeville, John Gower and William Longland. From the time of these authors, written English took on such form that you can read it to-day with little difficulty. Before their time you would find even Robert of Brunne, who said he wrote no strange English, rather hard to understand.

You have seen that since the coming of the first Christian priests to England, literature owes its life to the Church and to the labors of the churchmen, who, from the venerable Beda onward, had devoted themselves to the spread of learning and literature. They seem to have been pure and pious men in these early days of the church, who, sincerely religious, devoted themselves to good works. But during the years that followed the establishment of the religion of Rome in England the Christian Church was gradually growing corrupt. What leaven there was in it of corruption and hypocrisy had spread through the whole body, and at the time we have now reached, many of the religious teachers of the people had become so bad that the good men among

the priests, and the more intelligent part of the people had their eyes open to the abuses practiced by the clergy, and not frowned upon by the church. And in the beginning of the 14th century the discontent felt on account of these abuses made itself heard through two powerful mouth-pieces, the poem of William Longland and the preaching of John Wycliffe. Let me tell you first about William Longland's poem called the *Vision of Piers Ploughman*, which up to the end of the 14th century was the most popular poem—perhaps we might call it the first great popular poem—ever written in English.

William Longland was a priest, but one who loved goodness and hated hypocrisy, and his lines are full of satire against the falsehood and the vices of the religious teachers. The *Vision of Piers Ploughman* is a dream, or a succession of dreams in the course of which the writer wakes up, goes about his business, then falls into another nap and takes up the thread of his dream again. The poem is an allegory, which will remind you a little of Pilgrim's Progress. At the opening of it the writer sees the world in his dream like a great vanity fair, in which mingle priests, merchants, soldiers and husbandmen, each busy in his own way. Conscience, Pity, Reason, Law and other abstract qualities, are also represented as persons, and form some of the chief characters in the dream, but as in most other allegories, if you leave the story only to follow the meaning that lies underneath, the brain will be bewildered and the interest lost. In the second sleep *Piers Ploughman*—a type of the poor and simple of the earth to whom God reveals himself rather than to the rich and mighty—comes upon the scene. Ploughman was a happy name to catch the ear of the classes among whom it was meant this poem should be heard. Those who study Piers Ploughman will find in its lines the dawn-gleams of democracy, the recognition of certain rights belonging to the lowest man, which first found expression in poetry. Remember this and the utterance of

About 1362

Longland will take on a fresh interest, and a new life. The poem begins thus:

* In the *S*ummer *S*eason,
When *S*oft was the *S*un,
I put me into clothes,
As I a shepherd were,
In *H*abit as a *H*ermit,
Un*H*oly of works,
*W*ent *W*ide in this *W*orld,
*W*onders to hear,
And on a *M*ay *M*orning,
On *M*alvern hills,
Me befell a *W*onder—
I was *W*eary with *W*andering,
And *W*ent me to rest
Under a broad bank.
By a burn's side,
And as I lay, and leaned,
And looked on the waters
I *S*lumber'd into a *S*leeping,
It swayed so mury†
Then gan I to meet,
A marvellous dream
That I was in the wilderness,
Wist I never where.
And as I beheld unto the east
On high to the sun,
I saw a tower on a hill
Wondrously built * *
A fair field of folk,
Found I there between,
Of all manner of men—
The mean and the rich—
Working and wandering
As the world asketh.
Some put them to the plough,
Playing full seldom.
In setting and sowing
Working full hard.
In prayers and penance
Many took part
For love of our Lord,
Living full strict
In hopes to have after
Heavenly bliss * *
I found there friars—
All the four orders—
Preaching to the people
For profit to themselves.
Glosed the gospel
As it seemed good to them.

You may get some idea by these few lines of the style of the poem, but you cannot, from so brief an extract, form any idea of the influence it exercised against the corruption of priests and pardoners who sold absolutions for sins which they committed themselves without caring to be absolved. And you can hardly imagine, even if you read it entire, what an interest this old poem was capable of exciting in its day.

The *Vision* was followed, in the opening of the 15th century by *Piers Ploughman's Crede*, which was written by

*I have given these extracts from Piers' Ploughman in modern spelling, sometimes modernizing words that they be readily understood.

† It swayed so mury—The waters flowed on with such a murmuring sound.

some unknown poet later than Longland, in imitation of his style. This is even more severe against the abuses of religion than the first poem, and its hero is still the poor ploughman, who is able to teach truths to which his betters are blind. He is introduced bending over the plough, in ragged garments, with clouted shoes through which his toes thrust themselves, slobbered with mud, driving lean and hungry oxen. His wife walks beside him, with bare feet which track their way with blood, and in their work about the field they sing a song "that sorrowful is to hear." Yet from the lips of this poor ploughman come words of wisdom and consolation such as the rich and powerful might gladly hear. In its teachings, and in the picture the poem gives of the misery of the English peasant who tilled the land, there was a spirit of reform and of philanthropy which shows that the reformer was abroad in England at the opening of the 15th century.

In structure, both these poems go back to the early form of English poetry. They are in short, unrhymed lines, words nearly all of one syllable, and in the alliterative style of the Beowulf. Simple and direct in diction, it was made to speak from the heart of the writer to the common heart of the English people, and it deserved to be, as it was, the most popular poem, up to that time, ever written in English.

TALK XI.

On Three Great Contemporaries of Chaucer—John Wycliffe, John Mandeville and John Gower.

About the time of the author of *Piers Ploughman* came John Wycliffe, who stands as the first English reformer, and who ought to take a place beside Martin Luther, the sturdy German Reformer of a later time. Wycliffe was a monk like Luther, and like him a sincere and pious man. His eyes were early opened to the cheats practiced by mendicant friars, who went about begging from the people already too heavily taxed for the church, peddling the bones of some old saint, or some bits of wood that they pretended were pieces of the true cross, or other relics which they declared would insure the soul's salvation of the person who possessed them. Wycliffe preached boldly against all these abuses of religion, till the noble thought came to him to make a translation of the Bible for the common people, that, reading for themselves, they might understand the true meaning of the scriptures and be freed from the impositions of unworthy priests. And thenceforward he made it his life-work, through persecution and abuse which followed him beyond the grave, to give the simple teachings of Jesus to the people. Shortly before his death he was summoned to the papal bar at Rome to answer for his heresies, but his bodily strength had failed, and he died before he could meet his accusers. Forty years after his death the Pope ordered that his bones should be dug up from the grave in which they had rested so many years, and should be burned and scattered abroad. This was done, and his ashes were

About 1324 to 1384

cast into a stream which empties into the Avon river. "Thus," says the old historian, Thomas Fuller, "this brook did convey his ashes into Avon; Avon into Severn; Severn into the narrow sea; and this to the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine which is now dispersed the wide world over."

Wycliffe's translation of the Bible into simple, spoken English made the grand and poetic diction of the Scriptures common to all ears. It wrought almost as great an influence on language as the first introduction of Hebrew poetry had worked on literature. After opening up such a well of pure English, from which all who chose could drink freely, the language could not be again choked up and obscured by any foreign speech. The thirst of the people for the simple teachings of the gospels, so easily understood, that for so long a time had come to them mixed with all sorts of superstitions, can hardly be realized by us in this age of freedom. "A poor yeoman," says John Fox, the author of the History of Martyrs, "has been known to give a load of hay for a few leaves of Paul, or the gospels." Often the parchment was read till scarce a shred of it remained. You must fancy, since I have not time to tell you all about it, how the idea of liberty of thought and conscience among the people must have quickened the workings of that spirit which always breathes best in free air—the true genius of English literature.

In the same age with Piers Ploughman came also John Mandeville, who wrote excellent English prose. His great work is an account of his Travels in Palestine, and from thence to India and China. No modern tourist can rival the charm of these oldest books of travels such as were written by John Mandeville, by the Italian traveler, Marco Polo, and the early voyagers to our own country, who came two centuries after Mandeville. In those days the traveler saw and heard with the eyes and ears of a child—he told all he saw and believed all he heard. Thus Sir John

About 1300 to 1371

Mandeville has been accused of exaggeration because he told some incredible stories, but I think he wrote nothing that he did not believe. We must remember that in his time fact seemed much stranger than fiction; the truest things he told were often received with greatest incredulity, while a story like the following was sure of full belief. He says:

"Bethlehem is a little city, long and narrow and well-walled, and on each side enclosed with good ditches; and toward the last end of it is a very fair and handsome church with many towers, and pinnacles, and corners, strongly and curiously made. And between the city and the church is the field *Floridus*—that is to say, the field flourished. For a fair maiden was blamed with wrong and slandered, and was condemned to be burned in this place; and as the fire began to burn about her she made her prayers to our Lord, that as truly as she was not guilty He would of his merciful grace help her and make it known to all men. And when she had thus said she entered into the fire and immediately it was extinguished, and the fagots that were burning became red rose trees, and those that were not kindled became white rose trees, full of roses. *And these were the first rose trees, red and white, that ever man saw.*"

This was considered by pious readers a good, sensible story, but when Mandeville began to write out his ideas about the shape of the earth, men began to jeer at him, and laugh at his absurd notions. He gives at some length his ideas of geography and astronomy, derived from his extensive travel and observation, and finally says he believes this earth is round. "Nay, more," he says, "I tell you certainly that men may go all around the world, as well under as above, and might return so again to their own country if they had shipping and guides; and always they would find men, land, and isles as well as in our part of the world. For they who are of the antarctic are directly feet opposite of them who dwell under the polar star, as well as we and they who dwell under us, are feet opposite feet." As even in the time of Columbus, 150 years later, the theory of the roundness of the earth was not generally received, I think this argues very well for Mandeville's understanding.

"Of Paradise," says the old traveler, simply, "I cannot speak properly, for I was not there, * * * The earthly paradise, or Garden of Eden, as wise men say, is the highest point of the earth, and it is so high that it nearly touches the circle of the earth there as the moon makes her turn. And it is so high that the flood of Noah might not come to it. And Paradise is enclosed all about with a wall and men know not whereof it is, for the wall is all covered over with moss as it seems, and it seems not that this is natural stone. * * * And you shall understand that no man that is mortal shall approach to that Paradise, for by land may no man go, for wild beasts that are in the deserts, and for the high mountains and great huge rocks that no man may pass by for the dark places there; and by the rivers no man may go for the water runs so roughly and sharply, because it comes down so outrageously from the high places above that it runs so in great waves that no ship may run or sail against it. Many lords in past time have attempted to pass by these rivers into Paradise, with full, great companies, but they might not speed in their voyage and many died of weariness of rowing against the strong waves, and many of them became blind or deaf by the noise of the water, and many perished that were lost in the waves. So that no mortal man may approach that place without special grace of God and of that place I can tell you no more."

You will more fully understand how slightly English was esteemed as the language of literature when I tell you that Mandeville first wrote his travels in Latin, then translated them into French, and lastly put them in English, so as to be sure every man of his nation might be able to read them. The extracts I have given are in more modern English than he wrote, but his English is hardly more difficult than Chaucer's, and he is generally spoken of as the first prose writer in our language who can be read by a modern reader, unacquainted with old English.

Last of the group before Chaucer comes John Gower, a very tiresome old poet whom nobody reads now-a-days. Chaucer gave him the title of "*Moral Gower*," which has stuck to him from that time to this. He wrote three books, one in Latin, one in French and one in English. The English book has the Latin title of *Confessio Amantis* (the Confessions of a Lover). But, although

Born 1320.
Died 1402.

these confessions are illustrated by a great many stories, many of which are interesting and have been used over again with much better effect by later poets, yet, on the whole, Gower is so dull that we will leave him for a much more interesting man, his friend and superior, Geoffrey Chaucer.

TALK XII.

On Geoffrey Chaucer, his Life and Poetry.

Geoffrey Chaucer, the Father of English Poetry—what a proud title to wear for so many hundred years—is a different sort of a poet from John Gower, whom I have just mentioned. The two men seem to have been good friends, however, and in the "Confessions of a Lover," the goddess Venus, tells the lover to

Born 1328 or 1340. Died 1400.

> "Grete wel Chaucer when ye mete,
> As my disciple and my poete."

which is a compliment that Chaucer might well have returned by his epithet of "Moral Gower."

We do not know with certainty the date of Chaucer's birth. Some of his biographers think it is 1328; others, 1340. The first date is the one which has been the longest believed to be the true one; the last is that accepted by several modern scholars. For my part, I think the exact date really makes very little difference so long as we know the great events amid which his life was surely passed, the great ideas which were current in the age during which he must have lived in full mental vigor, and the fact that this group of literary men of whom I have spoken were his contemporaries. We know that he died in 1400, and lived in the reigns of three kings—Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV.

We do not know much about the early part of his life. He was born in London, the son of a wine-dealer. One of the first certain facts in his life, after the uncertain date of his birth, is that he was a member of a noble family as one of the pages of the household, which, in those days, was a respectable, indeed, an honorable capacity. He was with the army of Edward III when it went to invade France in 1359, and Chaucer was then made prisoner, and ransomed afterwards by the king. After this we hear of him frequently in the court records; once as having a pitcher of wine sent him every day from the royal wine cellars; another time as getting a pension from the crown, for services rendered; again as one of the Ambassadors who went to France to arrange the marriage of Richard II, and as concerned in other diplomatic missions. We know that his friend and patron was John of Gaunt, the Duke of Lancaster—called by Shakespeare "time-honored Lancaster"—whose son became King Henry IV. Chaucer married a Lady Philippa, and it is claimed by several writers that John of Gaunt married a sister of this very lady. If this were so, Chaucer and his noble patron were brothers-in-law.

John of Gaunt was at one time the head of the Wycliffe party, and, although he did not follow as far as Wycliffe led, he aided him in his earlier fight against Papal power by his strong influence. It is probable that Chaucer also sympathized with Wycliffe, and that he took the generous side in religion and politics. I am sure I hope so, for I like to associate the "Father of English Poetry" with freedom of thought and speech, and to believe that he was as much of a man as a poet, or the better poet that he was a liberal, outspoken man. Almost at the close of his century, and near the end of his life, Chaucer took a house on the lands of Westminster Abbey and sat down there to spend his latest days. When he died, he was buried in the Abbey, and you may there read his name on the stones

of the wall in the "Poets' Corner," the first of that long line of great names which adorns that sacred spot in the grand old Cathedral.

Chaucer wrote many works, sometimes in prose, although most commonly in verse. Many of his earlier poems are little more than translations. The *Roman de la Rose* which first made him known as poet, was a translation from two French writers, although we may be sure Chaucer could not handle anything without leaving a good deal of himself in it. He never made any pretense of originality, and always shows himself a sincere man and without affectation in his work. Others of his principal poems are *The House of Fame*, *The Book of the Duchess*, *The Legend of Good Women*, *The Assembly of Fowls*, *Troilus and Cressida*. But we have not time to look at these, but must come at once to his great work, *The Canterbury Tales*—the only one of his poems which is much read now-a-days.

The *Canterbury Tales* is a collection of stories told by a party of men and women who meet at the Tabard Inn, which was situated on the High street of Southwark, in London, to set out on a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Thomas á Becket in Canterbury cathedral, about fifty miles distant. They are a company taken from all ranks of life, and almost every condition is represented. Their number is nine and twenty, when they are joined by the poet, and the host of the Tabard Inn.

In the *Prologue*, which forms the preface of the stories, nearly every person in the party is described in an easy and familiar style, as if Chaucer were introducing you in a manner to make you perfectly well-acquainted with his character. Each figure drawn by his pen seems like a real person whom we see, rather than read about. The modern novelist, who prides himself on drawing life-like pictures of the men and women of this day, has never succeeded better than the old poet, who gives so perfect an idea of a group of every-day persons of the 14th century.

First of all comes the knight, "who from the time he first began to riden out, he loved chivalry, truth, honor, freedom and courtesy." He had been in many wars in south and east, at the taking of Alexandria, the siege of Grenada, and in wars against the heathen Turk. Yet, like other truly brave men, he is gentle and unassuming, "as meek of port as is a maid." "In truth," says Chaucer, "a very perfect, gentle knight." The next figure, that of the knight's son, a young squire, is a very different sort of person. He is a dashing young fellow, with curling hair, fair complexion; a fine horseman, who can also dance gracefully, write songs and sing them, "and play the flute like a lover." Then comes Madame Eglantine, a prioress of a convent, a sweet gentlewoman, who, although the bride of the church, wears as the motto on her brooch, "Love conquers all." Here is her picture as Chaucer gives it:

"Full well she sang the service divine,
Entuned in her nose full swetely;
And French she spoke full fair and cleverly,
After the school of Stratford upon Bow,
For French of Paris was to her unknown.
At meat she was well taught withal;
She let no morsel from her lippes fall,
Nor wet her fingers in her sauce-deep.
Well could she carry a morsel and well keep
That no drop ne'er fell upon her breast.
But for to speaken of her conscience,
She was so charitable and so piteous,
She woulde weep if that she saw a mouse
Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
Of smalle hóundes had she that she fed
With roasted flesh and milk and wastel bread;
And sore wept she if one of them were dead.
* * Her nose was straight; her eyes as grey as glass;
Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red,
And certainly she had a fair forehead.
Full tasteful was her cloake, as I was ware.
Of small coral about her arm she bare;
A pair of beads, gauded all with green;
And thereon hung a brooch of gold full sheen,

On which was written, first a crowned *A*,
And after '*Amor Vincet Omnia.*' "

Can we not see Madame Eglantine as plain as if she stood before us in broad day, with her grey eyes, her little, soft, red mouth, her fair forehead, and her dainty ways when she sits at the table. The only other woman of the party, except a nun attendant on the prioress, who passes without description, was the Wife of Bath, a great contrast to the delicate Madame Eglantine.

"She was a worthy woman all her live.
Of husbands at the church door had she five."

And besides her matrimonial experiences, she had been a great traveler, having been in Jerusalem, Rome, Germany, France. She had a fair face, though somewhat red and bold; her shoes were shining new, and her stockings of fine scarlet; she rode her ambling nag easily, and had on spurs like a man.

Next comes a monk, in a fur-trimmed mantle, his hood fastened under his chin with a curious pin of gold, and his scarf tied in a love-knot. His companion is a merry friar, who gives easy penance to his parishioners, and administers absolution "full swetely."

"Somewhat he lisped for his wantoness,
To make his English sweet upon his tongue."

The Oxford student who follows is lean, like his horse; his coat is threadbare; he might be twin-brother to the poor student of the present day. He would rather have a shelf full of books at his bed's head than rich clothes or any other pleasures. What a contrast to him is the Frankelein, an English Squire of the fourteenth century, with a beard white as a daisy, a full, red face, and all the marks of a gourmand.

"Without baked meat never was his house,
Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous,
It snowed in his house of mete and drink."

Then come a quartette of mechanics, all dressed in the

livery of their orders, each with well-filled purses, "and shaped to have been an alderman." The miller, the cook, the doctor, the lawyer, the merchant, the poor parson, and his brother, the ploughman—these last two, in our judgment, the only really pious persons in this company of religious pilgrims—make up the party. Such is a little glimpse of that group who set out on a soft April day on that immortal pilgrimage to Canterbury.

TALK XIII.

On The Stories of the Canterbury Pilgrims.

When the Canterbury travelers first set out upon their journey the jolly host of the Tabard proposes that they shall beguile the way by telling stories, each doing his share in turn, and when this is agreed upon, it falls to the Knight to begin. He tells the story of Palamon and Arcite, two noble kinsmen, who are sworn brothers in friendship till they both fall in love with the same lady, the fair Emelie, sister of Duke Theseus, who holds the two noblemen as his prisoners of war. I think you will find this, the Knight's Tale, the most interesting of all the stories. It is made gorgeous by the description of a tournament, so vivid that we seem to see the waving of plumes, the glitter of armor, and the very dust that rises from the field of conflict when the knights spur each other with their lances. Emelie, the heroine of this story, is one of the loveliest of all Chaucer's women. We see her first in a garden, where the birds are singing and the flowers blossoming under the shadow of the great stone tower, where the knights who love her are shut up in prison. These are the lines in which Chaucer describes her. It is on a May morning—

> When Emelie, that fairer was to seen
> Than is a lily on his stalke green,

And fresher than the May, with flowers new,
(For with the rosy color strove her hue,
I know not which was finer of them two.)
E'er it was day, as she was wont to do,
She was arisen, and already dight.*
For May will have no sluggardy at night.
The season pricketh every gentle heart,
And maketh him out of his sleep to start.

* * * * * *

Her yellow hair was braided in a tress—
Behind her back a yard long, I guess.
And in the garden at the sun uprist
She walketh up and down whereas her list;
She gathereth flowers, parti white and red,
To make a subtle garland for her head,
And like an angel heavenly she sang."†

Meantime the two prisoners, Palamon and Arcite, enclosed in the great stone tower over the garden, get their first sight of Emelie.

Bright was the sun and clear that morning,
And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
As was his wont, by leave of his jailor,
Was risen, and romed in a chamber on high.
In which he all the noble city sigh‡
And eke the garden, full of branches green,
There as this freshe Emelie, the shene,‖
Was in her walk, and romed up and down
This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon,
Goeth in his chamber, roaming to and fro,
And to himself complaining of his woe.
* * * * * And so befel
That thro' a window, thick of many a bar
Of iron great, and square as any spar,
He cast his eyen upon Emelie,
And therewithal he blenched and cried, "Ah!"
As tho' he stungen were unto the heart.

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* Dight—*dressed.*

† In this, as in some other extracts, I have occasionally slightly modernized a word or the spelling of a word, to make it more easily understood by the general reader.

‡ Sigh—*saw.*

‖ Shene—*beautiful.*

And at his cry Arcite anon upstart
And saye'd, "Cousin mine, what aileth thee?
That art so pale and deadly for to see
Why criest thou? Who hath done thee offense?
For God's love take it in all patience
Our prison, for it may none other be.
Fortune has given us this adversity."

* * *

Palamon answered, and said again:
"This prison caused me not for to cry,
But I was hurt right now, thoughout mine eye
Into my heart; this might my bane be,
The fairness of a lady that I see
Yond in the garden, roaming to and fro,
Is cause of all my crying and my wo.
I know not whether she be woman or goddess,
But Venus is it truly, as I guess."
And with that word Arcita gan espy,

* * *

Whereas this lady roamed to and fro,
And with the sight her beauty hurt him so,
That if that Palamon were wounded sore,
Arcite was hurt as much as he, or more,
And with a sigh he sayed piteously,
"The fresh-e beauty slayeth me suddenly
Of her that roameth in the yonder place,
And but I have her mercy and her grace
I am but dead, there is no more to say."
This Palamon, when he these wordes heard,
Dispiteously he looked and answered:
"Whether sayst thou this, in earnest or in play?"
"Nay," said Arcite, "in earnest, by my fay."*
This Palamon gan knit his brows twey.†
"It were," quoth he, "to thee no great honor,
For to be false, nor for to be traitor
To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother,
Sworn full deep and each of us to the other.

* * *

Thus art thou of my counsel out of doubt,
And now thou wouldst falsely been about

* Fay—*faith.*
† Twey—*two.*

To love my lady, whom I love and serve.
Nay, certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I loved her first, and told thee of my woe."

* * *

Then Arcita full proudly spake again,
"Thou shalt," quoth he, "be rather false than I."
And thou *art* false, I tell thee utterly,
For, par amour, I loved her first 'ere thou.
What wilt thou say? Thou knowest not just now
Whether she were a woman or goddess.
Thine is affection of holiness,
And mine is love, as to an earthly creature.
For which I told-e thee mine adventure,
As to my cousin and my brother sworn;
Suppose that thou lovedst her before,
Know'st thou not well the old clerk's saw
That who shall give a lover any law.

* * *

A man must needs love maugre his head,
He may not flee it tho' he should be dead.

* * *

And therefore at the king's court, my brother,
Each man is for himself, there is none other.
Love if thee like, for I love, and aye shall.
And truly, dearest brother, this is all."

And on this throwing down of the gauntlet on the part of Arcite the quarrel between the two kinsmen gets hotter and hotter, while in the garden below faire Emelie goes on picking her flowers, quite unconscious of all this pother over her head. I will not tell you all the story, because it is the one of all the Canterbury tales which I should most strongly advise you to read.

The story of Pious Constance is told by the Man of Law, and is of a beautiful princess of Rome who has wedded the Sultan of Syria, and on her nuptial eve is set adrift in an enchanted ship by her wicked mother-in-law. She floats over the ocean for many years till the vessel strands on the coast of Britain. Here she is succored by the governor of the port and his wife, Dame Hermegilde, till a false knight, who hates Constance because she had refused his love, slays

Dame Hermegilde and accuses Constance of the murder. She is taken for trial before the King, and must die unless she can find a champion who will prove her innocence in a contest of arms with the accusing knight. The King, touched with pity at sight of Constance, asks if she has no champion. She falls on her knees and answers that she has no defender but God, and then, rising, looks piteously about her.

"Have ye not seen sometime a pale face
Anong a press of him that has been led
Toward his death, where as he gets no grace,
And such a color in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bestad,
Amongest all the faces in that rout?
So stands Constance and looketh her about."

Is it any wonder that at sight of that pale, innocent face, the King is almost ready to get down from his throne and fight as her champion? He calls at once for a Breton book of the gospels, and as the knight swears on this that Constance is guilty, an unseen hand smites him, so that his neck is broken and his "eyes burst out of his face, in sight of everybody in that place." The British King Alla then marries pious Constance, so wonderfully protected, and in course of time, when the King is away on some foreign wars, a son is born to them. Constance again falls a victim to the plots of her second mother-in-law, who manages to have her sent back on the wonderful ship again, where she miraculously floats about till her boy grows to manhood, when she is restored to her husband, and the tale ends happily. The picture of Constance when she is sent to the ship with her baby is in Chaucer's tenderest vein.

"Her little child lay weeping on her arm,
And kneeling, piteously to him she said,
'Peace, little son, I will do thee no harm.'
With that her coverchief off her head she braid,
And o'er his little eyen [eyes] she it laid,
And on her arm she lulleth it full fast,
And unto heaven her eyen up she cast.

* * *

Therewith she looketh backward to the land,
And said, 'Farewell, husband ruthless;'
And up she rist, and walketh down the strand,
Toward the ship her followeth all the press,
And ever she prays her child to hold his peace;
And taketh leave, and with a holy intent,
She blesseth her, and into the ship she went."

Another of the most beautiful of all these stories, and the one which is, I think, most read, is the story of patient Griselda, told by the Oxford student. This tale, which Chaucer says he got from the Italian poet Petrarch, is of a meek woman who has married a man above her in rank, and is put to all sorts of cruel trials by her husband to prove her virtuous patience. She triumphs over all these tests, and is happy at last. Our modern ideas revolt so against her treatment that we can hardly read the poem in patience; and even Chaucer says:

This story is said, not for that wives should
  Follow Grisilde, as in humility.
For it were importable,* tho' they would.
  But for that every wight in his degree,
Should be as constant in adversitee,
  As was Grisilde, therefore Petrarch
  This story writeth, which in high style he inditeth.

If you do not care to read all the Canterbury Tales, these I have mentioned are the three I would advise you to read first. A few of the stories are too coarse for modern taste—those of the miller, the merchant, the reve, and one or two others. Chaucer, at the outset, declares he is not responsible for the moral of the stories, and only tells them as he heard them. I regret that he should have thought it worth while to tell all he heard. But it is easy enough for us to keep out of way of the gross persons of the company, and most of the tales are pure enough for any time.

Chaucer's quaint old English deters many students now-a-days from the attempt to read him. But a very little

* Importable—*unbearable.*

familiarity with him will make his language plain, with the occasional aid of a glossary to look up a word which has now become obsolete. And when once mastered, the elder English of Chaucer is delightful, and close knowledge of it will help to revive many dear and homely words that are fast disappearing from our language, and aid to make clear the meanings of other words, which we use without a full consciousness of their worth and richness. If we want to appreciate the beauty of our English tongue, we shall get great help by an acquaintance with Chaucer, and shall learn what a debt we owe to the Father of English poetry. And so we leave our good old poet reluctantly, as one with whom we would like to be better acquainted, to enter upon a century which is notable for two of the greatest events in the world's history. Let us see what these events are, and what influence they will be likely to work on *Literature.*

TALK XIV.

TELLING SOME OF THE GREAT EVENTS OF THE 15TH CENTURY—OF CAXTON AND HIS PRINTING PRESS; AND OF THE ROMANCE OF MORTE D'ARTHUR.

CHAUCER died in the opening year of the 15th century. With him literature seemed for a time to die also. The reign of the house of Lancaster brought in the hosts of bloody war; insurrections at home and battles abroad filled up the first half of the century, and when the house of York took the throne there was little quiet in which to hear the voice of poet or scholar. Two names that closely follow that of Chaucer are all the literary names best remembered till the close of the century. The first is that of John Lydgate, a monkish schoolmaster, who spent his leisure in writing poetry which we should pronounce very

Born 1375.
Died 1461.

dull, indeed; the second is that of a lawyer, Thomas Occleve, who wrote poetry even duller than Lydgate's. In the hundred years and more after Chaucer no such genius blazed out as we have seen in Wycliffe's prose and Chaucer's verse.

Born 1370. Died 1454.

But although few new books were written, the old books grew more and more into demand, and in no previous century were handsomer copies made of the great masterpieces of literature than in this time. So great was the increase in the making of books, that manuscript copying was no longer done wholly by monks, but became the work of men in every-day life. This change led naturally to the invention of printing, for as soon as book-making came to be a business of life, and not the pastime of scholars and priests, it passed into the hands of practical men, who would cast about to do the work more easily and rapidly than by the tedious way of hand-writing. Wooden blocks as large as a book page were first made, which were soon superseded by single letters of movable type, and from that time books could be made quickly, although at first they were not beautiful books, like those made by the painstaking monks, with their many colored inks, and slow, patient pens.

William Caxton, the first English printer, was a young man when he went to live in Belgium, as apprentice to a London merchant. He stayed there till past middle life, and rose to a respectable height in business. He was always of a book-loving turn, and in his spare time he copied manuscripts for his own delight. It was thus natural that he should have become interested in the new art of printing which had begun in Germany and flourished all about him, and when he was able to do so, he gladly dropped the pen and took up the quicker mode of type-setting. In 1474 he came home to England with a printing press of his own, and began business in one of the buildings belonging to Westminster Abbey. Here, under the walls that had sheltered Chaucer when he finished the Canterbury Tales, Caxton invited all who desired to come and buy his books or

Born 1412. Died 1492.

give orders for printing. All sorts of people answered this invitation; noble ladies and gentlemen of the realm were ready and glad to lend him their precious manuscript books to be copied by the printing press, and his work was honored as ought to be the work of a man who adds faithfully to the knowledge and progress of the world.

The list of the books which Caxton printed, shows good taste on the part of our first printer and publisher. They are from all sources—a miscellaneous, but very interesting library. The first book issued was a work on Chess, soon followed by a translation of the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece. He also published the first edition of Chaucer's works, and the first edition of Gower and John Lydgate. From his press came translations of *Virgil's Æneid*, *Ovid's Metamorphosues* and the *Consolations of Boethius*. He printed the tales of *Reynard the Fox*, so famous even to this day; he gave to the English reader the fables of Æsop and also gave them the *Book of Good Manners*, and *The Craft to know well how to Die*. Caxton deserves to be considered more than a mere craftsman in book-making, for many of these works he translated himself, and by using, whenever he could, the simple spoken English, he did good work in helping to form and make stable our language.

One of the most important books to our literature of all the number issued from his press was *The Morte D'Arthur*—the old stories of Arthur and his Knights, which were translated by Sir Thomas Malory from the French. In this book we have again the stories which belong to the Arthurian romance, woven into one. Here we see more fully than ever before the forms of King Arthur, Merlin, Sir Launcelot du Lake, Sir Percival, Sir Gawain, Sir Tristram, and the peerless and perfect Galahad. Here figure the beautiful Queen Guinevere, Isoud the fair, and Isoud the white-handed, Elaine the mother of Gallahad, and Elaine the lily maid of Astolat; and many other knights and ladies who form part of this fascinating romance.

1485.

This *Morte D'Arthur*, a collection of the same stories,

added to and enlarged, that had been made by Walter Map and his contemporaries, is the old book from which the modern poet, Tennyson, has drawn some of the beautiful stories which he tells in his *Idyls of the King*. The whole book of Malory's is a prose poem, so beautiful that I am going to quote for you one chapter—that which tells of the beautiful Elaine as she floats down to Camelot in her funeral barge.*

Morte D'Arthur, Chap. 20, Book 18:

So by fortune King Arthur and the Queen Guinevere were speaking together at a window, and so as they looked into the Thames they espied a black barget in the river, and had marvel what it meant. Then the King called Sir Kay, and showed it him. "Sir," said Sir Kay, "wit you well, there is some new tidings." "Go thither," said the King, "and take with you Sir Brandiles and Sir Agravaine, and bring me ready word what is there." Then these three knights departed, and came to the barget, and went in; and there they found the fairest corpse lying in a rich bed, and a poor man sitting in the barget's end, and no word would he speak. So these three knights returned unto the King again and told him what they found.

"That fair corse will I see," said the King. So then the King took the Queen by the hand and went thither. Then he made the barget to be holden fast, and the King and Queen entered, with certain knights that were with them. And there he saw the fairest woman lie in a rich bed, covered to her waist with many rich clothes, and all was of cloth of gold, and she lay as though she had smiled. Then the Queen espied a letter in her right hand, and told it to the King. Then the King took it, and said: "Now I am sure this letter will tell what she was and why she is come hither." And so when the King came within his chamber he called many knights about him, and said he would wit openly what was written within that letter. Then the King brake the seal, and made a clerk to read it, and this was the intent of the letter:

"*Most Noble Knight—Sir Launcelot: Now has death made us two at debate for your love; I was your love, that men called the fair Maiden of Astolat; therefore, unto all ladies I make my moan; yet pray for my soul, and bury me at the last, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless knight.*"

* In reading this extract from Morte D'Arthur, you should read after it the same account in Tennyson's *Elaine*, in order to see the contrast between the old form and the modern.

This was all the letter. And when it was read, the king, the queen and all the knights wept for pity. Then was Sir Launcelot sent for. And when he was come, King Arthur made the letter to be read to him; when Sir Launcelot heard it, word by word, he said, "My Lord, Arthur, wit ye well, I am right heavy of the death of this fair damsel. God knoweth, I was never causer of her death by my willing, and that I will declare to her own brother. I will not say nay, but she was fair and good, and much was I beholden to her, but she loved me out of measure." "Ye might have showed her," said the Queen, "some bounty and gentleness that might have preserved her life." "Madam," answered Launcelot, "she would none other way be answered but that she would be my wife, or else my love, and of these two I would not grant her. * * * For, madam, I love not to be constrained to love, for love must arise out of the hearts and not by no constraint." "That is true," said the king, and many knights, "Love is free in himself, and never will be bounden, for where he is bounden he loseth himself." "Then," said the king to Sir Launcelet, "It will be your worship that ye oversee that she be interred worshipfully." "Sir," said Launcelet, "that shall be done as I can best devise." And so upon the morn she was interred richly, and Sir Launcelet offered her mass-penny, and the knights of the Table Round that were there offered also.

Malory's *Morte D'Arthur*, was the last great book, and the most famous, that the 15th century produced. But although it had given to the world so little literature, it had seen two great events which influenced its whole future. Of one of these, the invention of printing, I have already spoken. The second was the discovery of the New World by Columbus, an event so strange and full of mystery that it must have stimulated the imagination of the dullest and most commonplace man, and made for the time a place for poetry in the most matter-of-fact brain. Early in the 16th century, books of voyages to the New World began to appear in Italy and Germany, and the stories of men who had sailed in unknown seas, under skies glittering with new stars, excited the wonder of all who read them. English sailors who had voyaged with Sebastian Cabot to these new lands, brought back to home-ports tales rich in wonders. Thus the discovery of America was sure to work upon literature, although, in an age without telegraphs, or steam engines,

or newspapers, the strongest forces must work more slowly than in our time, and the immediate results of such discoveries as those of printing and the New World were not seen in a day.

TALK XV.

ON LITERATURE IN THE REIGN OF HENRY VIII; MORE'S UTOPIA; TYNDALE'S BIBLE; SKELTON, THE COURT POET; THE SONNETS OF SURREY AND WYATT.

THE reign of Henry VIII covers nearly the first half of the 16th century; yet, although the last half of this century is, perhaps, the most glorious of any period in our literature, its first years do not shine with the promise of that afterglory. There are a few great names, but not that crowd of rare spirits that make the age of Queen Elizabeth so resplendent. The great event of Henry VIII's reign, however—the separation of the Church of England from that of Rome—did much to inspire the thought of the age which followed. Although Henry did not greatly care for the freedom of any man except himself, and meant to hold a tight rein over other men's actions and consciences, still he took a great stride toward freedom when he made the Church of England independent of that of Rome, and all advances toward freedom are sure to quicken the spirit of fine literature, which is the free expression of the highest thought of the best men of the age. Let me tell you briefly of the greatest men and the best work done in literature from the opening of the century to the time when the great Queen Elizabeth took her father's seat as an English sovereign.

The noblest and most memorable work of the age was done by William Tyndale when he undertook the translation of the Bible, and his name deserves to be set high in the annals of English literature and language. Tyndale was only

a poor tutor in the house of a nobleman in Gloucestershire; when one day as they sat at table, a religious discussion arose, in which a bigoted priest who was present said, dogmatically, "Better be without God's laws than the pope's." Tyndale took fire at this, and rising grandly said: "In the name of God I *defy* the pope and his laws, and if God spares my life, I will cause the boy who drives the plough to know more of God's laws than either you or the pope."

1525. A few years later, in spite of persecution, he published his translation of the New Testament into English. I think that we may decide that this work of Tyndale's was the greatest literary work between the time of Chaucer and Spenser. The Bible, made accessible to the common people, was not only a religious book, but a fountain-head of literature. The daily speech of men and women was made rich by the introduction into it of the phraseology of the Scriptures rendered into the homely and eloquent English which Tyndale used, and from that day to this, apt and fitting quotations from the Bible have been so imbedded in common speech that we use them often without consciousness of their source. Tyndale died in Holland at

1536. the stake, a martyr for the work he did, and the opinions he held.

Another noble gentleman, who also died for loyalty to his opinions, very near the time of Tyndale's martyrdom, was

Born 1480. Sir Thomas More, one of the saintliest and most

Died 1535. lovable characters in all this time. He did not follow the king in his separation from the church of Rome, but remained a staunch Catholic, and avowed his religious scruples against the divorce of the king from Queen Katharine, and the marriage with Anne Boleyn. He was executed on Tower Hill, dying with the serenity which became such a noble and true man. As he laid his head upon the block, he carefully put away his long full beard from under the axe, saying simply, "This should not be cut; it has never committed treason."

His great book, "*The Utopia*," was written in Latin, a

language which was still, and for a long time after, used by scholars in prose writings. "Utopia" was an imaginary land, a wonderful country whose society and laws were ideally perfect. A sailor, sunbrowned and strange as Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," who says he had been on voyages to the New World with the great discover Amerigo Vespucci, gives the account of this wonderful country and its romantic discovery. In this fabled Utopia, More could embody all his ideas of a perfect commonwealth, and so show by contrast, the defects in laws and social conditions in England. And his ideas of religious charity and reforms in society are so generous and grand, that this nineteenth century has not yet excelled them. But when he pictures an ideal city, and his highest conception of the material comforts of life, we shall find that we have to-day outstripped his best imaginings. For instance, he thus describes Amaurote, the chief city of the Utopians:

"The city is compassed about with a high and thick stone wall, full of tunnels and bulwarks. A dry ditch, but deep, goeth about three sides. On the fourth side the river serveth for a ditch. The streets be *twenty feet broad.* On the back side of the houses, through the whole length of the street, lay large gardens. The houses are curiously builded after a georgeous and gallant sort, with three stories, one over the other, the outside being of hard plaster, or else of brick, and the inner side well strengthened with timber-work. * * They keep the wind out of their windows with glass, for it is there much used, and also with fine linen cloth dipped in oil, for by this means more light cometh in and the wind is better kept out."

This picture of the city and its houses, while it may surpass in comfort those in More's day, does not excite any special envy in us; but when he speaks of justice among men, and religious tolerance, then he rises to heights as grand as we have attained. And at the close he makes a noble plea for laboring men whose rights at that time had been little heard of:

"What justice is it," he bursts out, "that a goldsmith, a usurer, or any of those which do nothing at all, or else what they do is such as is not necessary to the commonwealth, should have a pleasant liv-

ing through idleness or unnecessary business, while in the meantime poor laborers, carters, ironsmiths, carpenters and ploughmen, by so great and continual toil as drawing and bearing beasts be scant able to sustain, and again so necessary toil that without it no commonwealth were able to continue and endure one year, should get so poor and hard a living, and live so wretched and miserable a life that the state and condition of many laboring beasts may seem much better and wealthier. * * Is this not unjust and behind public weal which gives great fees and rewards to *gentlemen*, as they call them, and on the contrary part maketh no provision for ploughmen, colliers, laborers and carpenters? * * Therefore, when I consider and weigh in mind all these commonwealths which now-a-days do everywhere flourish, so God help me, I can perceive nothing but a conspiracy of rich men, procuring their commodities under the name and title of the commonwealth."

These generous words from the pen of a man in high position, who might easily have been blind to the misery of those who were poorer and weaker than he, gives Sir Thomas More a warm place in my liking, and the Utopia a high place among the books of the world.

Born 1460. Died 1529.

John Skelton comes in as court poet of Henry the VIII, although I fancy him a man fitter for a bar-room than court, a man of coarse manner and gross wit, although he had sprightliness and a good deal of humor. He had been tutor to Henry the VIII before he became king, and was high in favor at court. He was a clever rhymester, and wrote verses full of sparkling vivacity. Nobody before his time had proved how flexible the English language was and how it could be twisted hither and thither in rhyme. But we should not now read Skelton's verses with much interest. This is partly because he was a writer of satire, and satire, however clever, rarely ever is interesting in any time but that in which it is written. One of his satires was a scorching attack upon the great Cardinal Wolsey, called "*Why come ye not to court?*"

His work generally considered most poetical is the *Book of Philip Sparrow*, a lament for a dead sparrow, which has so much ease and grace in rhyming that it has never lost its charm. But the most entertaining of his poems to me is the

Garland of Laurel. In this the author goes asleep under an oak, and in his dream hears an argument between the Goddess Pallas and the Queen of Fame, whether Skelton shall have a place in the court of the latter. After a long discussion, all the great poets of the world are summoned to decide the matter. They come in stately train, led by Apollo. Among them, says the poem,—

> "I saw Gower, that first garnished our English verse;
> And Chaucer, that nobly enterpized
> How that our English verse might freshly be ennewed;
> The monk of Bury after them ensued,
> Dan John Lydgate, these English poets three;
> As I imagined, repaired to me."

Finally the author is admitted into the House of Fame on an equality with these three great poets, and shortly after is called upon to praise a bevy of fair ladies, attendants of the Countess of Surrey. He praises these ladies in different odes, dedicated to each by name. Some of these verses are very pretty. He writes in this way to Lady Isabel Pennell. He begins by comparing her to

> "The fragrant camomile,
> The ruddy rosary,
> The sovereign rosemary
> The pretty strawberry,
> The columbine, the nepte,
> The gillyflower, well set,
> The proper violet.'

And tells her:

> "Your color
> Is like the daisy flower
> After an April shower,
> Star of the morrow grey,
> The blossom of the spring,
> The freshest flower of May."

Mistress Margaret Hussey is also addressed as—

> Merry Margaret,
> As midsummer flower,
> Gentle as falcon
> Or hawk of the tower,
> With solace and gladness
> With mirth and no madness,
> All good and no badness;
> So joyously,
> So maidenly,
> So womanly
> Her demeaning,
> Far, far passing
> That I can endite,
> Or suffice to write,
> Of merry Margaret
> As midsummer flower,
> Gentle as falcon
> Or hawk of the tower.

I know no other instance of a poet so cleverly exalting himself as Skelton does in this poem of *The Garland of Laurel.*

Two gallant and courtly figures come next in sight. They are Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, and his friend, Sir Thomas Wyatt. These gentlemen, familiar with all the polite learning of their time, were masters of verse-making. They introduced the form of the Italian sonnet, and have the credit of having polished and improved poetic expression, introducing, more than it ever before had prevailed, the melody of the southern poetry into English verse. Wyatt wrote many songs and sonnets. The titles to some of these are ludicrously sentimental. There is one "On my love that pricked her finger with a needle;" another, "On my love from whom he had her gloves," and still another, "The lover compareth his heart to an overcharged gun." Could anything in poetry be more overstrained?

Born 1518, Died 1547.

Born 1503, Died 1542.

Poor Surrey was another of the victims of Henry the VIII, and was beheaded on Tower Hill; while Wyatt, who died a little earlier than Surrey, narrowly escaped the same fate, and lay for a time in prison, in great danger from that dreadful axe in the Tower. Of these two poets, Surrey writes the better verses. A great many of them are dedicated to Geraldine, to whom he writes love verses; although, as this Geraldine was only thirteen years old, and probably could not understand what the poet meant by his protestations of devotion, there can be nothing very serious in the compliments he pays. Probably Surrey thought Geraldine was as good a name to address his verses to as the Lauras or Beatrices of the Italian poets whom he imitates. We will close this talk by reading one of his songs to Geraldine.

A PRAISE OF HIS LADY, WHEREIN HE REPROVETH THEM THAT COMPARE THEIR LADIES WITH HIS.

Give place, ye lovers, here before
That spent your boasts and brags in vain,

My lady's beauty passeth more
  The best of yours, I dare well sayn,*
Than doth the sun the candle light,
Or brightest day the darkest night.

And thereto hath a troth as just
  As had Penelope the fair,
For what she says ye may it trust
  As it by writing sealed were;
And virtues hath she many moe†
Than I with pen have skill to show.

I could rehearse, if that I would
  The whole effect of Nature's plaint,
When she had lost the perfect mould
  The like to whom she could not paint;
With wringing hands how she did cry!
And what she said, I know it, I.

I know she swore with raging mind;
  Her kingdom only set apart;
There was no loss by law of kind
  That could have gone so near her heart.
And this was chiefly all her pain,
She could not make the like again.

Since Nature thus gave her the praise
  To be the chiefest work she wrought,
In faith, we think some better ways
  On your behalf, might well be sought
Than to compare, as ye have done—
To match the candle with the sun.

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* Sayn—*say.*
† Moe—*more.*

PART III.

FROM SPENSER AND SHAKSPEARE TO MILTON.

1550 TO 1608.

GOLDEN AGE OF ENGLISH POETRY.

INTRODUCTORY.

In this third division of my Talks, I am going to tell you about the principal writers who appeared from the time Queen Elizabeth ascended the English throne, until the end of the reign of James I. There is no period of our literature which includes so many great names. Within the limits of a little more than half a century, Spenser, Shakspeare, Bacon and Milton were born. And beside these four names that shine with such immortal lustre, are other names of poets, scholars, soldiers, discoverers, statesmen, and orators, who form a group unequaled before or since, in England's history.

Queen Elizabeth herself is a fitting central figure in this age. When she came to the throne, a young and beautiful woman, after the stormy struggles between Catholic and Protestant in her father's and sister's reigns, she seemed to bring peace and prosperity to the land. Her court and her people welcomed her as if she were a creature almost divine. From the first this ideal sovereign inspired the poet's pen, and she appears in his verse as a being glorified by all that myth or legend or his own fancy can suggest.

Elizabeth had been educated by one of the most famous of schoolmasters, good Roger Ascham, who had trained her in Greek, Latin, and other branches of learning. She could speak the principal court languages of Europe, and, better than that, could use her own language forcibly and well;

she was well read in the current literature of her time; interested in the rising poets who sought her patronage; and, indeed, had tried her own fair head at verse-making, and on occasion could turn a clever epigram at rhyme.

It was the tendency of Elizabeth's reign to bring in luxury of living, and all elegancies of dress and manners. The queen was passionately fond of fine clothes and everything handsome about her. She had in her wardrobe three thousand gowns for one item of dress alone, and her lords and ladies were not far behind her in extravagance. One gets in history some idea of the splendid dresses of her courtiers. One of Sir Walter Raleigh's portraits was painted in a white satin doublet, richly embroidered, "with a great string of pearls round his neck, each big as a robin's egg;" and a hat with a long feather, fastened by a great, blazing ruby. Walter Scott, who writes the romance of history, but always keeps close to the fact, tells us of the Earl of Leicester's handsome clothes in his novel of *Kenilworth.*

The young Englishman when he left college was sent to France or Italy to finish his education, to polish and refine his manners, and he brought back with him all sorts of new fashions. The young tourists from England were noted for following all the extravagancies then in vogue. Old John Lyly advises the young man: "Let not your mind be carried away with vain delights, as with traveling into strange countries, where you will see more wickedness than learn virtue or wit. Neither with costly attire of the new cut, the Dutch hat, the French hose, the Spanish rapier, and the Italian hilt." While Shakspeare hits off this weakness of the time in Portia's merry description of the English lord—"How oddly he is suited. I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behavior everywhere."

But the graduates from Oxford and Cambridge brought back from Italy more than fine clothes and polished manners. They brought the knowledge of a literature which worked a perceptible change on their own. Italian poetry,

even in Chaucer's time, had exerted an influence over English poetry; later, Surrey and Wyatt, as we have just seen, had been disciples of the Italian school. But never was this influence so strongly marked as in this era we are now entering. A flood of romances, in prose and verse, from the rich fountain of Italian literature, poured into England. It seemed as if all at once all the elements that could gratify the taste, stimulate the imagination, and enrich the fancy, were brought to bear upon the age that produced both Shakspeare and Spenser.

In an age so crowded with great writers, both in prose and poetry, it is hard to decide which we shall begin to talk about. But in my imagination the great figures of the time divide themselves into groups: Sir Philip Sidney and Sir Walter Raleigh, with one or two minor poets, form a circle about their grand central figure, Edmund Spenser; next to this group, apart in solitary greatness, stands Lord Bacon; following him comes Shakespeare, towering like a Colossus above the crowd of dramatic poets that surround him; and last come the lyric poets, all the singers, whose gay music is heard all through the century from the time of Elizabeth to that of Charles II. So, beginning with Spenser and the figures that attend upon him, we will enter upon the *Golden Age*, or as it is generally called, the *Elizabethan Age* of English poetry.

TALK XVI.

On Edmund Spenser.

Edmund Spenser is the second great English poet in the line which begins with Geoffrey Chaucer. It was almost two hundred years after Chaucer had laid down his pen when Spenser's great poem, *The Fairy Queen*, was published. It is not every year, not every generation of men, even, that produces a great poet.

Born 1552. Died 1598.

There is the same vagueness and uncertainty about the events of Spenser's early life that we find when we come to study the biographies of all our great poets. Most of the writers who undertake to tell us of the lives of Chaucer, Spenser or Shakespeare, make tiresome researches into family history, without much result. Evidently Genius is quite independent of genealogies, and the great poet does not, like the snail, carry his house on his back. It is of very little consequence, therefore, that Spenser's parents were of obscure origin, and that Spenser claimed remote kinship with a family of good name and estate.

He was born in London in 1552, or very near that date, and began his education at a London grammar school. He entered Cambridge College early, but left before his studies were completed—forced to do so, some of his biographers think, by the poverty of his purse. From college he went to the North of England and fell in love there with a beautiful Rosalynde (her last name no one has been able to find out with certainty), who seems to have been unable to love him in return, and to give vent to his disappointment, he wrote *The Shepherd's Calendar*, which first proved that he was a poet. Let us be grateful to the fair Rosalynde that she

was indifferent to the poet, since we reap the benefit of her indifference.

The Shepherd's Calendar is dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, who was one of Spenser's best friends and patrons. Sidney, Raleigh and Spenser were very near each other in age, Sidney being about a year younger and Raleigh a year or two older than the great poet. One of the finest things about these two noblemen is that they were generous friends of Spenser. And there can be no better proof of Spenser's friendship for them than his dedication of *The Fairy Queen* to Walter Raleigh, and the *Lament to Astrophel*,* which he wrote on Sidney's death.

When Spenser was about twenty-eight, he went to Ireland as secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, Lord Arthur Grey. There, after a time, a castle and some lands were given him, the share of a confiscated estate of a famous Irish rebel. In this castle—Kilcolman, on the banks of the river Mulla—he lived happily, working upon his greatest of poems, *The Fairy Queen*. He had been more fortunate in a second love than in the affair with Rosalynde, and was married to a lovely wife, to whom he wrote an Epithalamium, which is one of the grandest wedding hymns ever written. Here in his beautiful retirement, Sir Walter Raleigh, then one of the officers in the English army in Ireland, paid him a visit. I fancy the two friends lying at ease on the green banks under the trees that bordered the Mulla, while Spenser read extracts from *The Fairy Queen*, and Raleigh praised it and answered with bits of verse of his own making. There, doubtless, they discussed poetry, politics, their common friends in London, and all the gossip of the time. It was not long after Raleigh's visit that Spenser published the first part of *The Fairy Queen*. He went to London, and Queen Elizabeth gave him a pension for his verses, which they richly deserved for the fine praises of her which the poem contains.

* Astrophel was the name Sidney assumed in his Sonnets.

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Spenser kept his home in Ireland for twelve years, although he was in England during that period for a year or two at a time. In the last of the year 1597, his affairs looked prosperous; the Queen had recommended him to a good appointment; the first half of the Fairy Queen was published, and the last half begun; when a fresh rebellion broke out in Ireland. Spenser's house was burned, and he and his family were forced to fly. It is reported that his new-born infant was left in the castle in this hurried flight, and perished in the flames. He came to London, overwhelmed by all these troubles, and died a few months later, broken-hearted and in poverty, and was laid in Westminster Abbey, near Chaucer.

Besides his *Shepherd's Calendar* and *Fairy Queen* Spenser wrote many other poems. The most beautiful among these shorter works is *Muiopotmos*, or the Tale of a Butterfly. This is like a picture for brilliancy of color and description. If you want to know Spenser's quality as a poet with little study, read this poem; his *Lament to Astrophel;* and a few extracts from the Fairy Queen; and you will get an excellent idea of him.

His poem of poems, *The Fairy Queen*, stands as one of the monuments of literature. There are few people who have read it through, and their number is likely to grow less as the years go by. It is useless for any one to read poetry merely for the sake of saying she has read it, and I certainly should advise no one to read the poem unless she reads it purely for the enjoyment of it. To those who do enjoy it there is no need to say anything in its praise. To those who would find it tedious to read the entire poem —and I think perhaps these will form the larger number—I will briefly tell its plan, and give a few extracts as illustrations of the style.

In his preface to Raleigh, Spenser himself gives his design. This was to write a poem in twelve books, each book representing some high virtue. Thus the Red-Cross Knight in the first book is Holiness; in the

second book Sir Guyon is Temperance; in the third book Britomart, the heroine, illustrates Chastity; Cambel and Triamond are the heroes of the fourth book, the Legend of Friendship; Sir Artegall in the fifth book represents Justice; and Sir Calidore in the sixth and last, is the embodiment of Courtesy. Spenser had planned to write twelve books, but only finished the first six, leaving a few fragments towards the last half of his work.

The stanza in which the poem is written has since his time been called *Spenserian.* It was the eight lined stanza used by the poets of Italy, to which a ninth line was added by Spenser which gave it its name.

The poem is an allegory, and you will find in some editions of the work explanation of the real events which are told in allegorical form, and the names of the real persons who are meant under the names of Arthur, Sir Guyon, Timeas, Amoret, Belphœbe, and the rest. For my part, I prefer to read Spenser for his poetry and not for his allegory, and, therefore, I attempt no explanation of it here.

The first book of The Fairy Queen tells the story of Una, one of the most beautiful figures in all the poem. The picture of the gentle knight "ypricking o'er the plain," while a gentle lady rides close beside him, upon a lowly ass, "more white than snow," is the very first picture that catches our eyes as we open the book. Soon after we see Una separated from her knight, who has been drawn away from his true lady by an enchantress, who assumes her shape, and Una is described as in search of him:

> Yet, she, most faithful lady, all this while
> Forsaken, woeful, solitary maid,
> Far from all peoples' preace,* as in exile,
> In wilderness and wasteful deserts strayed
> To seek her knight; who subtily betrayed,
> Through that late vision which the enchanter wrought,
> Had her abandoned; she of naught afraid,
> Through woods and wasteness wide, him daily sought,
> Yet, wished tidings none of him unto her brought.

* Press or crowd.

One day, nigh weary of the irksome way,
From her unhasty beast she did alight;
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay,
In secret shadow, far from all men's sight.
From her fair head her fillet she undight
And laid her stole aside; her angel's face,
As the great eye of heaven, shined bright,
And made a sunshine in the shady place;
Did never mortal eye behold such heavenly grace?

It fortuned, out of the thickest wood
A ramping lion rushed suddenly,
Hunting full greedy after savage blood.
Soon as the royal virgin he did spy,
With gaping mouth ran at her greedily.
To have at once devoured her tender corse;
But to the prey, when as he drew more nigh,
His bloody rage assuaged with remorse,
And, with the sight amazed, forgot his furious force.

Instead thereof he kissed her weary feet,
And licked her lily hands with fawning tongue,
As he her wronged innocence did weet.*
O, how can beauty master the most strong,
And simple truth sudden avenging wrong!
Whose yielded pride and proud submission,
Still dreading death, when she had marked long.
Her breast 'gan melt in great compassion,
And drizzling tears she shed for pure affection.

* * * *

The lion would not leave her desolate,
But with her went along, as a strong guard
Of her chaste person, and a faithful mate
Of her sad troubles and misfortune hard.
Still when she slept, he kept both watch and ward;
And when she waked, he waited diligent,
With humble service to her will prepared.
From her fair eyes he took commandment,
And ever by her looks conceived her intent.

The story of the fair Una ends happily, and we see her at the end of Book I united to her knight on a happy wedding

*Weet—*to know.*

day, in which she lays her sad garments aside and appears in a gown—

* * * * * *

All lily-white, withouten spot or pride,
That seemed like silk or silver woven near,
But neither silk nor silver therein did appear.

The blazing brightness of her beauty's beam,
And glorious light of her sunshiny face
To tell, where as to strive against the stream:
My rugged rhyme were all too rude and base
Her heavenly lineaments for to enchace.
No wonder if her own dear-loved knight—
All were she daily with himself in place—
Did wonder much at her celestial sight;
Oft had he seen her fair, but never so fair dight

* * * * * *

And even as his eye did her behold,
His heart did melt in pleasures manifold.

TALK XVII.

On Spenser's Fairy Queen.

The story of Florimel, a musical name made out of flowers and honey, is another of the interesting episodes in *The Fairy Queen.* She appears first in the third book, a beautiful picture of fright, fleeing on a white palfrey from a monster who seeks to devour her. She re-appears in many cantos, in all sorts of romantic adventures, until Book V, when all her troubles are ended amid the festivities that attend her marriage to the handsome Prince Marinell.

The women in Spenser's poem are a constant delight in the imagination. They live in his pages like creatures in some land of enchantment, and while they are not like real women in a real world, they are so natural to their surroundings that we cannot help believing in them as much as if they had actually existed.

The heroine of the third book is Britomart, a royal maid of Britain, who puts on a helmet and armor and in disguise of a knight goes forth to seek her lover, Sir Arthegall. In her course Britomart meets with all sorts of romantic adventures. Yet Spenser has managed to preserve for his heroine all the sweet charm of womanliness in spite of her Amazonian equipment.

Here are some stanzas which give an account of her battle with the scornful Marinell, afterwards the bridegroom of Florimel.

The fourth canto of the third book begins with this description of the battle:

Where is the antique glory now become
That whilom * wont in women to appear?
Where be the brave achievements done by some?
Where be the battles, where the shield and spear,
And all the conquests that them high did rear
That matter made for famous poet's verse
And boastful men so oft abashed to hear?
Been they all dead, and laid in doleful hearse,
Or do they only sleep and shall again reverse? †

Yet these and all else that had puissance ‡
Cannot with noble Britomart compare,
As well for glory of great valiance
As for pure chastity and virtue rare,
That all her goodly deeds do well declare
Well worthy stock from which the branches sprang,
That in late years so fair a blossom bear, ‖
As thee, O queen, the matter of my song,
Whose lineage from this lady I derive along.

So Britomart kept on her former course,
Nor ever doffed her arms, * * *
But forth she rode without repose or rest,
Till to the sea coast at length she her addressed.
* * * * * * * *
There she alighted from her light-foot beast
And sitting down upon the rocky shore,

* Whilom—*formerly.*
† Reverse—*return.*
‡ Puissance—*power.*
‖ Spenser, by poetic license, makes Britomart an ancestress of Queen Elizabeth.

Bade her old squire unlace her lofty crest.
Then having viewed awhile the surges hoar,
That 'gainst the craggy cliffs did loudly roar,
And in their raging surquedry * disdained,
That the fast earth affronted them so sore,
And their devouring couvetousness restrained;
Thereat she sighed deep, and after thus complained:

"Huge sea of sorrow and tempestuous griefs,
Wherein my feeble bark is tossed long,
Far from the hoped haven of relief,
Why do thy cruel billows beat so strong?
And thy moist mountains each on others throng,
Threatening to swallow up my fearful life?
O, do thy cruel wrath, and spiteful wrong,
At length allay, and shut thy stormy strife,
Which in this troubled bosom reigns and rages rife.

"Thou God of winds, that reignest in the seas,
That reignest also in the continent.
At last blow up some gentle gale of ease,
The which may bring my ship, ere it be rent
Unto the gladsome part of her intent!
Then when I shall myself in safety see,
A table, for eternal monument
Of thy great grace and my great jeopardy,
Great Neptune, I avow to hallow unto thee."

Then, as she thus lamented, she espied,
Where, far away, one all in armor bright;
With hasty gallop, towards her did ride.
Her dolor soon she ceased, and on her dight †
Her helmet, to her courser mounting light;
Her former sorrow into sudden wrath
(Both cousin passions of distroubled spright ‡)
Converting, forth she beats the dusty path;
Love and despite at once her courage kindled hath.

As when a foggy mist hath overcast
The face of heaven and the clear air engrossed,
The world in darkness dwells; till that at last
The watery south wind from the sea-board coast

* Surquedry—*pride.*
† Dight—*to put on, to dress.*
‡ Spright—*spirit.*

Upblowing, doth disperse the vapor lo'ste,
And pours itself forth in a stormy shower.
So the fair Britomart, having disclosed
Her cloudy care into a wrathful stour,*
The mist of grief dissolved did into vengeance pour.

Eftsoones, her goodly shield addressing fair,
The mortal spear she in her hand did take,
And unto battle did herself prepare.
The knight, approaching, sternly her bespake;
"Sir knight, that dost thy voyage rashly make
By this forbidden way, in my despite,
Nor dost by others' death example take,
I bid thee now retire while thou hast might,
Lest afterward it be too late to take thy flight."

Thrilled with deep disdain of his proud threat,
She answered thus: "Fly they, that *need* to fly,
Words fearen babes; I mean not thee entreat
To pass, but maugre † thee will pass or die."
Nor longer stayed for th' other to reply,
But with sharp spear the rest made dearly known.
Strongly the strange knight ran, and sturdily
Struck her full on the breast, that made her down
Decline her head, and touch her crouper with her crown.

But she again him on the shield did smite
With so fierce fury and great puissance,
That, thro' his three-square scuchin ‡ piercing quite
And thro' his mailed hauberk, by mischance,
The wicked steel through his left side did glance.
Him so transfixed she before her bore
Beyond his croupe, the length of all her lance;
Till sadly soucing ‖ on the sandy shore,
He tumbled in a heap, and wallowed in his gore.

Like as the sacred ox, that careless stands
With gilded horns and flowry garlands crowned,
Proud of his dying honor and dear bands,
Whilst the altars fume with frankincense around.
All suddenly with mortal stroke astound ¶

* Stour—*outbreak, fit of passion.*
† Maugre—*in spite of.*
‡ Scuchin—*scutcheon.*
‖ Soucing—*tumbling.*
¶ Astound—*astounded.*

Doth grovelling fall, and with his streaming gore
Stains all the pillars and the holy ground,
And the fair flowers that decked him before—
So fell proud Marinell upon the precious shore.

The Second Book, which gives the adventures of Sir Guyon, has some of the finest contrasts, from Spenser's grandest style to his most beautiful and poetic. The visit to Mammon's Cave is one of the strongest pieces of a description, and the account of Guyon's entrance into the gardens of the Bower of Acrasia is one of the most beautiful things in all the book. No other poet could ever describe a garden as Spenser could. His description of the garden in *The Fate of the Butterfly* is as good as a painting of it, and the gardens of this Bower of Bliss are no less perfectly portrayed.

Sir Guyon enters these gardens through a gate framed of interlacing vines, whose luscious bunches of fruit seem to offer themselves to the hands of all who pass under it. Within this gate lies the bower of Acrasia, the mistress of the enchanted place. We will begin just where Guyon passes through the gateway:

There the most dainty Paradise on ground
Itself doth offer to his sober eye,
In which all pleasures plenteously abound,
And none does other's happiness envy—
The painted flowers; the trees upshooting high;
The dales for shade; the hills for breathing space;
The trembling groves; the crystal running by;
And that which all fair works doth most agrace,
The art, which all this wrought, appeareth in no place.

And in the midst of all a fountain stood.

* * * * *

Infinite streams continually did well
Out of this fountain, sweet and fair to see,
The which into an ample laver fell,
And shortly grew to so great quantity
That like a little lake it seemed to be,
Whose depth exceeded not three cubits hight,
That through the waves one might the bottom see,

All paved beneath with jasper shining bright,
That seemed the fountain in that sea did sail upright.

Eftsoones he heard a most melodious sound,
Of all that might delight a dainty ear,
Such as at once might not on living ground
Save in this paradise, be heard elsewhere;
Right hard it was for wight which did it hear,
To read what manner music that mote be,
For all that pleasing is to living ear
Was there consorted in one harmony:
Birds, voices, instruments, winds, waters, all agree.

The joyous birds, shrouded in cheerful shade,
Their notes unto the voice attempered meet;
The angelical soft trembling voices made
To the instruments, divine respondence meet,
The silver-sounding instruments did meet;
With the bass murmur of the waterfall:
The waterfall with difference discreet,
Now soft, now loud, unto the wind did call;
The gentle warbling wind low answered to all.

The whiles some one did chant this lovely lay—
"Ah, see, whoso fair thing doth fain to see,
In springing flower the image of thy day!
Ah, see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modesty;
That fairer seems the less ye see her may!
Lo! see soon after, how more bold and free
Her full-bared bosom she doth broad display,
Lo! see soon after how she fades and falls away."

But it is not by such extracts as these that we can hope to get any full idea of the riches of *The Fairy Queen*. Only by reading for yourselves can you get any fair conception of the numberless figures that move on to the stately music of Spenser's stanza. The lovely Amoret, the spirited Belphœbe, the delicate Florimel, the learned Canace, the bold Satyrane, Braggadochio—whose name tells his character—Sir Calidore, of exquisite courtesy, the noble Sir Scudamour, the magnanimous Arthur—these are a few only of the graceful, chivalrous and fascinating creations of our poet's unwea-

ried fancy. Add to these the elfin beings conjured by his magic pen—the giants, dwarfs, monsters; the sprites, composed of snow and wax, of fire and dew. Then transport the mind to the scenery in which he places his characters—the fair green woods, the sea grottos, the noble castles, the subterranean caves, the fairy gardens, and you will just begin to fathom the inexhaustible depths of his fancy.

Spenser's poetry has always been a delight to young versifiers. Probably no other poet has ever inspired so many men, great and little, to write verses. And that is quite natural. He is so stimulating to the imagination, his verse is such a store-house of fancy, that I can think of the younger poets settling on it as the bees of Mt. Hybla on a flower-garden. None of our poets have so exuberant an imagination, and of them all, Shakespeare's description fits Spenser best—"He is a creature of imagination, all compact,"

> "And as imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
> Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name."

TALK XVIII.

On Sir Philip Sidney and the Arcadia.

To almost every one who looks back in imagination upon the age of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Philip Sidney will appear one of the most interesting figures among all those that grace her court. He was noble in birth, gifted in mind, handsome in person, a favorite courtier of the Queen, a gallant soldier in the field, beloved by all who knew him, yet with all so modest, gentle, full of noble humanity, that he seems to have had all the virtues as well as all the grace of manhood. Nothing but good has ever been said of him, and one of the last acts of his life crowns

Born 1554.
Died 1586.

gloriously all that goes before. He died of a wound which he got at Zutphen, where he was fighting in the cause of the Netherlands, in their wars with Spain. Just as he was to be taken from the field after he had received his death-wound, a bottle of water was brought him to drink. As he was about to put it to his lips he saw a wounded soldier carried by, who cast wistfully at the water his dying eyes. This, Sir Philip seeing, gave the bottle to the poor man, saying simply, "Thy necessity is yet greater than mine." What fame of authorship could outshine the lustre of such a deed as this?

Yet, although writing was not the pursuit of his life, he had great gifts as a writer. He died at thirty-two, and his brief day was full of other affairs than those of literature, which in him seems only the amusement of an idle hour. If he had made it his first following, one can fancy he might have risen to great heights.

His principal works are his sonnets from *Astrophel to Stella*, in verse; and *The Arcadia*, and *Defense of Poetry*, in prose. *The Arcadia* is a romance inspired largely by the ideas of love and chivalry, which belong to the middle ages. The plot is very simple. Sidney calls it "an idle work which, like the spider's web, will be thought fitter to be swept away than worn to any other purpose." Two young princes, in disguise, wander into the kingdom of Arcadia, where King Basilius keeps his court, with his wife Gynecia and his two daughters Pamela and Philoclea. The two young strangers naturally fall in love with the two princesses, and the various adventures of these princely persons, with the stories of other heroes and heroines woven into the narrative, and occasional passages in verse, make the *Arcadia*.

In spite of its faults—and it has sometime the fault even of dullness—it is rich in fine sentences and lines that are almost a poem by themselves. You can see the nobility and the wisdom of Sidney's thoughts in the sentences which meet the eye as one turns over the leaves at random.

"I am no herald to inquire of men's pedigrees, it sufficeth me if I know their virtues."

"They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts."

Of women he says:

"Nature is no step-mother to that sex, how much soever some men, sharp-witted only in evil speaking, have sought to disgrace them."

"Provision is the foundation of hospitality, and thrift the fuel of magnificence."

"O, imperfect proportion of reason, which can too much forsee and too little prevent."

"Condemning all men of evil because his mind had no eye to espy goodness."

"There is no service like his that serves because he loves."

"What's mine, even to my soul, is yours, but the secret of my friend is not mine."

The Arcadia contains many episodes, which taken out from their context would form complete and interesting stories by themselves. The best of these is the tale of Argalus and Parthenia, whose story appears at intervals through the book. These are two lovers, who after many haps and mishaps, are united in wedlock. A beautiful passage describes them in their married estate, as they are visited by a messenger who comes to summon Argalus to go to war in aid of the two princesses who have been taken prisoner by their foes.

"The messenger made speed and found Argalus at a castle of his own, sitting in a parlor with his fair Parthenia, he reading in a book the stories of Hercules, she sitting by him as to hear him read, but while his eyes looked on the book, she looked in his eyes, sometimes staying him with some pretty question, not so much to be resolved of her doubt, as to give him occasion to look upon her. A happy couple! he joying in her, she joying in herself, but in herself, because she joyed in him; both increased their riches by giving to each other, each making one life double because they made a double life one. Where desire never wanted satisfaction, nor satisfaction ever bred satiety; he ruling because she would obey, or rather because she would obey, she therein ruling.

"But when the messenger came in, with letters in his hand and haste in his countenance, though she knew not what to fear, yet she feared, because she knew not, but rose and went aside while he de-

livered his letters and message, and afar off she looked now at the messenger, and then at her husband, the same fear which made her loth to have cause of fear, yet making her seek cause to nourish her fear. And well she found there was some serious matter, for her husband's countenance figured some resolution between loathsomeness and necessity, and once his eyes cast upon her, and finding hers on him, he blushed, and she blushed because he blushed, then straight grew pale, because she knew not why he had blushed. But when he had read, and heard and dispatched away the messenger, like one in whom *honor could not be rocked asleep by affection*, with promise soon to follow, he came to Parthenia, and as sorry as might be for parting, but more sorry for her sorrow, he gave her the letter to read. She with fearful slowness took it, and with fearful quickness read it, and having read it, "Ah, my Argalus," said she, "and have you made such haste to answer. and are you so soon resolved to leave me?"

But he discoursing unto her how much it imported his honor, which, since it was dear to him, he knew it would be dear to her, her reason, overclouded with sorrow, suffered her not to reply, but left the charge thereof to tears and sighs, which he, not able to bear, left her alone, and went to give orders for his departure.

But by the time he was armed and ready to go, she had recovered a little strength of spirit, and seeing him armed and wanting nothing for his departure but her farewell, she ran to him, took him by the arm, and kneeling down, without regard to who either heard her speech or saw her demeanor: "My Argalus, my Argalus, do not thus forsake me. Remember, alas! remember that I have an interest in you which I will never yield shall be thus adventured. Your valor is already sufficiently known; sufficiently have you done for your country; enough there are beside you to lose less worthy lives. Woe is me! what shall become of me if you thus abandon me? Then was it time for you to follow these adventurers when you adventured nobody but yourself, and were nobody's but your own. But now, pardon me, now or never I claim mine own; mine you are, and without me you can undertake no danger, and will you endanger Parthenia? Parthenia shall be in the battle of your fight, Parthenia shall smart in your pain, and your blood must be bled by Parthenia!"

"Dear Parthenia," said he, "this is the first time that ever you resisted my will; I thank you for it, but persevere not in it, and let not the tears of those beloved eyes be a presage of that which you would not should happen. I shall live, doubt not; for so great a blessing as you are, was not given unto me so soon to be deprived of it. Look for me, therefore, shortly, and victorious; prepare a joyful welcome, and I will wish for no other triumph." She answered

not, but stood up, as it were, thunder-stricken with amazement, for true love made obedience stand up against all other passions. But when he took her in his arms, she fell into a swoon, so he was fain to leave her to her gentlewomen, and carried away by the tyranny of honor, though with many a back-cast look and hearty groan, went to camp."

The story follows Argalus to the field, where he is killed in combat with his enemy Amphialus, dying in the arms of his Parthenia, who arrives upon the field only to receive his dying farewell, but not in time to save his life by her entreaties to his foe. Soon after this, Parthenia, dressing herself like a knight, in black armor, challenges Amphialus, and from him receives her own death-wound. Amphialus does not discover that it is Parthenia in disguise with whom he is fighting, until he has fatally wounded her, and then he is overcome with grief and shame at what he has done.

"Therefore Amphialus, putting off his head-piece and guantlets, kneeling down unto her, and with tears testifying his sorrow, he offered his hands, by himself accursed, to help her, protesting his life and power to be ready to do her honor. But Parthenia, who had inward messengers of the desired death's approach, looking on him, and straight turning away her feeble sight as from a delightless object, drawing out her words, which her breath, loath to depart from so sweet a body, did faintly deliver: "Sir," said she, "I pray you, if prayers have place in enemies, to let my maids take my body untouched by you. Argalus made no bargain with you, that the hands that killed him should help me. I have of them—and I not only pardon but thank you for it—the service which I desired. There rests nothing now, but that I go live with him, since whose death I've done nothing but die." Then pausing, and a little fainting, and again coming to herself: "O, sweet life, welcome," she said. "Now feel I the bands untied of the cruel death which so long hath held me. And, O life, O death, answer for me, that my thoughts have, not so much as in a dream, tasted any comfort since they were deprived of Argalus. I come, Argalus, I come. And, O, God, hide my faults in thy mercies, and grant, as I feel thou dost, that in thy eternal love, we may love each other eternally;" and with this, casting up her hands and eyes to the skies, the noble soul departed, one might well assure himself, to heaven, which left the body in so heavenly a demeanor.

Thus ends the story of Argalus and Parthenia, which is only one of the many episodes of *The Arcadia.* Although it is a little stilted for our modern taste, and many sentences are involved and over-full of words, there are many touches of nature and of feeling in it that will go straight to the heart.

Close beside Sidney should come the name of his biographer and bosom friend, Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke, who desired to have for his epitaph that he had been "Servant to Queen Elizabeth, Counsellor to King James and Friend to Sir Philip Sidney." He was a courtier-poet, who wrote plays and sonnets in verse, and a life of his friend Sidney, in prose, which is most to be valued of all his works.

It is said that Sidney intended the princes in the Arcadia, Pyrocles and Musidorus, for himself and Lord Brooke. The two gentlemen were very close and dear friends during Sidney's short life. Lord Brooke long outlived his friend, dying at an advanced age. One of the writers of the time says of him that of all Queen Elizabeth's favorites "he had the longest lease and the smoothest time without rub," and that "he came to court backed with a plentiful fortune, which, as he was wont to say, was better held together by a single life, wherein he lived and died, a constant courtier of the ladies." He would hardly have gained mention in the present as a literary man if it were not for his friendship with Sidney, and his biography of him, which gives him an honorable place among this group of worthies.

TALK XIX.

On Sir Walter Raleigh, Samuel Daniel, and Michael Drayton.

Like Sir Philip Sidney, Walter Raleigh was a man of large gifts, and so wonderfully versatile that what he did in literature seems only the diversion of his leisure hours. Hardly less full of beauty and vitality than Sidney, Raleigh holds our interest to the end of his long life. Sidney died in early manhood, but Raleigh outlived his generation. Spenser, Essex, Shakspeare, all were dead, when, at sixty-six, he laid his noble, handsome head under the axe of King James' headsman. He was not only a poet and scholar—a man of scientific attainments, too,—but a clear-headed statesman, an adventurous sailor, a skillful military leader, and a polished orator.

Born 1552
Died 1618

Raleigh wrote the first part of a great *History of the World.* He never finished the work, and all there is of it is in one great, ponderous folio, which we should find dull reading. There is also a little volume of his poems collected, but it is disputed whether or no he wrote some of the best included in this handful. I like best of all his writings, or any that have been ascribed to him, his private letters, which are written in vigorous English, in the style of a master of language. Here is an extract from one that he wrote to Robert Cecil, who had just lost his wife, a kinswoman of Raleigh. He begins:

"There is no man sorry for death itself, but only for the time of death, every one knowing that it is a bond never forfeited of God. If, then, we know the same to be certain and inevitable, we ought to take the time of his arrival in as good part as the knowledge, and

not to lament on the instant of every seeming adversity which has been on the way to us from the beginning.

"It pertaineth to every man of a wise and worthy spirit to draw together into sufferance the unknown future to the known past. * * * It is true that you have lost a good and virtuous wife, and myself an honored friend and kinswoman, but there was a time when she was unknown to you, for whom you then lamented not. She is now no more yours, nor of your acquaintance, but immortal, and not needing your love and sorrow. Therefore you do but grieve for that which is as then it was, when she was not yours, only bettered, with this difference, that she hath past the wearisome journey of this dark world, and hath possession of her inheritance.

"I believe that sorrows are dangerous companions, converting bad into evil and evil into worse. They are the treasures of weak hearts, and foolish. The mind of man is that part of God in us, which, by so much as it is subject to any passion, by so much is it further from him that gave it us. Sorrows draw not the dead to life, but the living to death."

Such noble and serene philosophy as this, Raleigh might not always be able to live up to, and, indeed, there were times when his own great troubles drew from him passions of grief such as he argues against. But he lived a life full of useful activity, and met death bravely on the scaffold. We as Americans owe him remembrance, because he did more than any other one man of his time to further the colonizing of America; worked and planned for it till his fortunes failed. And when he was arrested for treason by King James, and imprisoned in the Tower, he still said in a spirit of prophecy—for American affairs never looked more hopeless—"I shall yet live to see that an English nation."

When he ascended the scaffold, the little colony at Jamestown, Virginia, was eight years old, and the Puritans in Holland were just forming their plans for emigration to the New World. As he closed his eyes upon the world, is it just possible that Raleigh may have seen, in that one struggling offshoot from the parent State just fastened on the shores of Virginia, a dim foreshadowing of that great nation of English stock which in two centuries and a half should cover America from ocean to ocean?

The name of Samuel Daniel has grouped itself closely in my mind among the friends of Spenser, perhaps because some one has ventured a guess that the Rosalinde with whom Spenser fell in love, when he wrote the *Shepherd's Calendar*, was *Rose Daniel*, a sister of this poet. He was a musician's son, which has given his biographer reason to say that the poet inherited his father's melody and put it into his verse. He wrote such flowing, pure English, that he was called "well-languaged Daniel," and some of his little songs are very graceful and musical. It is a pity that instead of writing lyrics, he should have taken a dry subject in history for the theme of his most ambitious poem. This was *The History of the Civil Wars*, in which he puts the Wars of the Roses into verse. It speaks well for his genius that he has managed to infuse a little breath of poetry into so dull a recital.

Born 1562. Died 1619.

A subject, even more dull than this of Daniel, was used by another poet of this group. This is the *Polyolbion*, written by Michael Drayton; which is nothing less than a geographical description of England, written in about thirty thousand lines of twelve-syllabled verse. There is a great deal that is interesting in the Polyolbion and in so much verse there must be some poetry; but I am sure even the genius of Spenser could not have made anything but a dull poem out of such a dull theme, and, in consequence, nobody ever reads the Polyolbion.

TALK XX.

On Francis Bacon, Baron Verulum, Viscount St. Albans.

Francis Bacon is the great philosopher, the most profound thinker of his age. His system of philosophy, which is called from him the *Baconian* system, wrought a revolution in thought, and has had a great influence on human action from his time to ours. I shall not attempt to explain his philosophy, because philosophy and science do not come within the province of these talks, but will simply tell you that all his efforts were to make philosophy of practical benefit to humanity, rather than to keep men wandering in a vague region of inquiry upon points that the mind never can solve. He taught men to reason from experience, to found their knowledge on results gained by experience, applying it to works really useful to mankind. Hitherto, the philosopher had been a man occupied with abstract questions, carrying his head aloft in the clouds; Bacon occupied himself with questions that bore upon the comfort of human beings and the improvement of human conditions. As Macaulay has said, in few words, "Bacon taught that philosophy was made for man, not man for philosophy."

Born 1561. Died 1626.

Francis Bacon was the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord-keeper of the Seal under Queen Elizabeth. His uncle, Lord Burleigh, was England's finance minister for nearly half a century, and Robert Cecil, Bacon's cousin, was one of the ablest and most powerful politicians of the later years of Queen Elizabeth and the first half of the reign of James I. Surrounded by kinsfolk so great, it might be fancied that Bacon's fortunes were as-

sured, but it seems to be the fact that he met only small and grudgingly-given help from Burleigh or his other relatives of influence, and it is certain that he owed his success to his own great ability, and not at all to his powerful kinsfolk.

That Bacon was the greatest intellect of his age is hardly doubted; of the greatness and nobility of his character there are many doubts. The chief stain upon his name is one of ingratitude, which has never been wiped out. During his whole life he had no friend more generous than the Earl of Essex, who befriended him when he most needed friendship. But when Essex was accused of treason, Bacon led the accusation, prosecuted the charge against the unhappy earl, proved it, and gained the sentence of death against his former friend and patron; and finally, after the death of the earl, wrote an account of his treason which still further blackened the character of the unfortunate Essex. Bacon's apologists plead that, as a lawyer, it was his duty to his queen and his country to pursue this course, but I think every generous spirit will condemn Bacon, and will rate higher the obligations of gratitude and friendship than those of political duty such as this.

Bacon rose rapidly in the reign of James I. He held his father's office of Lord-Keeper, was then made Lord High Chancellor, and finally was created Viscount St. Albans. Near the close of his life he was accused of corruption in his high office, was tried for this charge, made an abject confession, and was sentenced to be expelled from the House of Lords, to be heavily fined, and to be imprisoned in the Tower. His sentence was but mildly carried out. The King released him from prison in two days, his fine was remitted and he finally resumed his seat in the House of Peers, but he never recovered from his disgrace, and it sullies to this day his character as a statesman.

The cause of his death was his zeal for science. He was revolving in his mind a theory about the arrest of decay in ani-

mals by means of cold, and when driving one severe winter's day he alighted from his carriage and stuffed a dead fowl with snow. In this experiment he took the cold of which he died. His will contains the following appeal to the judgment of the future, and shows that he foresaw that his intellectual greatness would overshadow the actions that marred the nobleness of his life and character: "*For my name and memory, I leave it to men's charitable speeches, to foreign nations, and to my own country after some time has passed over.*"

Of all Bacon's writings, his *Essays* belong most to literature, and so most concern us. They were his first publications, and were at once widely read in his own country, and translated into both French and Italian. Thirty years after their first appearance, Bacon carefully revised them, adding to their number and re-publishing them, with a preface in which he says: "These, of all my works, have been most current. For that, as it seems, they come home to men's businesse and bosomes." This is indeed the true secret of the immortality of any man's written words, that they should *come home to men's business and bosoms.*

The *Essays*, which altogether make only one little volume, are brief dissertations on a great variety of subjects, running through the gamut of human interests, as *Death*, *Adversity*, *Riches*, *Love*, *Friendship*, *Marriage*, *On Gardens*, *Building*, *and the Regimen of Health.* These little papers say more in brief space, and contain more food for thought, than anything else that I know of their length, or even a good many times their length, in the English language. I do not know a better book to pick up and read two or three sentences to set one thinking wholesomely. It seems as if the wisdom of a good many ages had been garnered here, ripe and ready for the use of all future generations. I shall quote one of the shorter essays entire, and then give extracts from two or three others. First, we will read this, on *Revenge:*

"Revenge is a kind of wild justice, which, the more man's nature runs to, the more ought law to weed it out. For, as to the first wrong, it doth but offend the law; but the revenge of that wrong, putteth the law out of office. Certainly, in taking revenge, a man is but even with his enemy; but in passing it over, he is his superior, for it is a prince's part to pardon. And Solomon, I am sure, saith: '*It is the glory of a man to pass by an offense.*' That which is past, is gone and irrevocable, and wise men have enough to do with things present and to come. Therefore, they do but trifle with themselves that labour in past matters. There is no man doth a wrong for the wrong's sake, but thereby to purchase himself profit, or pleasure, or honour, or the like. Therefore, why should I be angry with a man for loving himself better than me? And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill nature, why? Yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other way. The most tolerable sort of revenge is for those wrongs which there is no law to remedy. But then let a man take heed the revenge be such as there is no law to punish, else a man's enemy is still beforehand, and it is two to one. Some, when they take revenge, are desirous the party should know whence it cometh. This is the more generous, for the delight seemeth to be, not so much in doing the hurt as in making the party repent; but base and crafty cowards are like arrows that fly in the dark.

"Cosmos, Duke of Florence, had a desperate saying against perfidious or neglecting friends, as if those wrongs were unpardonable. 'You shall read,' he said, 'that we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but you never read that we are commanded to forgive our friends.' And yet the spirit of Job was in better tune—'Shall we,' saith he, 'take good at God's hands, and not be content to take evil also?' And so of friends in a proportion.

"This is certain, that a man that studieth revenge keeps his own wounds green, which otherwise would heal and do well. Public revenges are for the most part fortunate; but in private revenges it is not so. Nay, rather, vindictive persons live the life of witches, who, as they are mischievous, so end they unfortunate.

Here are a few sentences from his *Essay on Death:*

"Men fear Death as children fear to go in the dark. And as that natural fear in children is increased with tales, so is the other.

"It is worthy the observing that there is no passion in the mind of man so weak but it mates and masters the fear of Death. And therefore Death is no such terrible enemy when a man hath so many attendants about him that can win the combat of him. Revenge triumphs over death; Love slights it; Honour aspireth to it; Grief flyeth to it; Fear pre-occupieth it.

"It is as natural to die as to be born, and to a little infant perhaps the one is as painful as the other. He that dies in an earnest pursuit is like one wounded in hot blood, who for a time scarce feels the hurt. And, therefore, a mind fixed, and bent upon somewhat that is good, doth avert the dolors of death. But above all, believe it, the sweetest canticle is *Nane dimittis*, when a man has obtained worthy ends and expectations."

These essays have also many sentences which are a text for a whole sermon—as these:

"A man that is young in years may be old in hours, if he have lost no time.

"Virtue is like a rich stone—best plain set.

"They are happy men whose natures sort with their vocations.

And we will end these extracts from Bacon's Essays, which I hope will give you such a taste as shall make you desire to read them in full, with a sentence or two from his essay on *Studies*, which every student should commit to memory:

"Read not to contradict or confute; not to believe and take for granted; not to find talk and discourse, but to weigh and consider.

"Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested.

"Reading maketh a full man; conference a ready man; writing an exact man. Therefore, if a man write little he hath need of a great memory; if he confer little he have need of a present wit; and if he read little he had need to have much cunning to seem to know that he doth not. Histories make men wise; poets, witty; mathematics, subtle; natural philosophy, deep; logic and rhetoric, able to contend. Nay, there is no stand or impediment in the wit, but it may be wrought out by fit studies."

I think after reading these extracts, you will agree that there is much riches in small space in these *Essays*, and that this is a book which is to be *chewed and digested.*

TALK XXI.

On the English Drama and some of the Play-writers Who Came before Shakspeare.

One of the most wonderful things to note in this sixteenth century is the sudden growth of the English Drama. Until after the middle of the century there are few plays worth mentioning as literature. All peoples have some sort of drama early in their history, just as children will act out in their plays that which they see done by grown-up people: the affairs of the household, the church service, the wedding or the funeral. The early English drama was very like this sort of child's-play. The drama was usually under the direction of the church, the plays nearly all written by priests, and generally represented some scene from the Old or New Testament. These plays (called miracle-plays, or mysteries) had such subjects as *Feast of Balshazzar*, *Raising of Lazarus*, *The Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Eden*, and it was not felt irreverent to show the most sacred scenes and characters on the stage. If you have heard or read any account of the *Passion Play*, still represented in a town of Germany, in which the trial and crucifixion of Christ is dramatized, you will have some idea of what these old plays were like.

One sometimes finds these early dramas very amusing For instance, in the play of *Noah's Flood*, Mrs. Noah is a high-tempered scold, who refuses to go into the ark unless all her neighbor-gossips are saved as well as herself; and when carried into the ark by main force, by her sons, she boxes Noah's ears, in a towering rage, on entering. The play of *Lucifer's Fall* represents Lucifer as a stage villain of the

deepest dye; and all sacred incidents are treated in the homeliest, most matter-of-fact manner. Up to the middle of the sixteenth century—the century in which Shakspeare was born—the literature of the drama was almost all of this crude sort.

I shall not weary you with a history of the early drama, or enumerate the old plays written before Shakspeare's time. Let me only tell you that the first comedy that had the form and spirit of English comedy, was Roister Doister,
1551. written by an Eton schoolmaster, Nicholas Udall; and that the oldest tragedy was written by Thomas Sackville, and had for its subject *Ferrex and Porrex*, two British princes descended from the great Brutus. Their story was told by Layamon, in the *Brut*, from whence later poets took it.

Passing by most of the plays and play-writers, who came before Shakspeare, I will touch briefly upon the four most remarkable men who preceded him in writing for the stage. These are George Peele, Robert Greene, John Lyly, and Christopher Marlowe.

George Peele bore a bad reputation even in his time,
Born 1552. which was not so fastidious as our own. He seems
Died 1596? to have been a ragged fellow, indifferent to fame or fortune, not caring whether he got his dinner by a song, a jest, or even by beggary or fraud. Yet he wrote plays in which there is a good deal of poetic merit, and he was a scholar of classical training, as his poetry shows. He wrote a number of plays. *The Old Wives' Tale*, *David and Bethsabe*, *The Battle of Alcazar*, and others.

One of his plays, *The Arraignment of Paris*, tells the classic story of the judgment of Paris, and the award of the golden apple. With the characteristic flattery of the age, Peele ends this drama by bringing in Diana to present the apple to Queen Elizabeth, who is judged to possess the beauty of Venus, the majesty of Juno, and the wisdom of Minerva, all combined in her own royal person.

Peele has a delicate, poetic touch, although he has less dramatic power than any of the four poets I have mentioned. His allusions to Nature are in the spirit of a true poet. He speaks of

> "The primrose and the purple hyacinthe,
> The dainty violet and wholesome mint,
> The double daisy, and the cowslip, queen
> Of summer flowers, do overpeer the green,
> And round about the meadow as ye pass,
> Ye may not see, for peeping flowers, the grass."

We can hardly believe that the man who was familiar with such blossoms could be a frequenter of miserable taverns, and a low fellow, given to coarse jests and rude buffoonery.

Robert Greene's life is not more pleasant to read of than that of George Peele, and the two men were friends and associates. Greene was also a man of education, and says he had a degree from both Oxford and Cambridge. He traveled on the continent and wasted his time in bad company, until finally he lost his health and his credit with his friends. "Then," he says, "I became an author of plays and of penny-a-line pamphlets, so that I soon grew famous in that quality, that who for that trade known so ordinary about London as Robin Greene."

Born 1560. Died 1592.

His death was caused by a supper in which he ate and drank too much of pickled herring and Rhenish wine. He died in a wretched lodging, where the wife of a poor shoemaker tended him in his last moments, and after death crowned him, at his request, with the poet's garland of bay leaves. Can you imagine anything more grim than the dead poet in his miserable garret, crowned with the green wreath of bays?

Greene wrote a very large number of novels, poems, plays, and a great many pamphlets or shorter works, which, in that day, were called *prose tracts.* Of these prose tracts, the two most notable are, *The Triumph of Time*, a very pretty story, and well told, used by Shakspeare for the plot

of *Winter's Tale;* and *The Groat's worth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentance*, written in his last illness, in which he recounts the chief facts of his life, and gives vent to his penitence for his bad and useless career. This last tract has been much talked about, because there is an ill-natured allusion in it to Shakspeare, which makes it seem as if Greene and his companions were rather jealous of Shakspeare's success as a play-writer, and accused him of using some of their works as the foundation for his more popular plays.

Greene wrote five plays known to be his. He may have written a good many more which have not come down to us. The best of his plays, I think, is *The Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay.* The plot of this is varied; one part of it turns on the loves of Prince Edward and his friend, Ned Lacy, Earl of Lincoln, for Margaret, a gamekeeper's fair daughter; the other part of the plot relates to the great friar, Bacon, the most learned Englishman of the 13th century, of whom many wonderful fables were told in English legend and ballad.

Bacon and Bungay had made a brass head, which, it is predicted, will speak and tell them how to make a wall which shall surround England and make her proof against all foes. When the head is done, the friar, worn out with sleepless work, sets his servant, Miles, to watch it while he gets a little sleep. Here is the scene in which Miles is set to watch:

[Enter Friar Bacon, with a lighted lamp and a book in his hand, Miles following him, armed in a ridiculous manner, from head to foot.]

Bacon (drawing the curtains and revealing the brazen head)—Miles, where are you?

Miles. Here, here, sir.

Bacon. How chance you tarry so long?

Miles. Think you that watching the brazen head craves no furniture? * I warrant you, sir, I have so armed myself that if all your devils do come, I will not fear them an inch.

* Craves no furniture, *i. e.*, needs no furnishing with armor.

Bacon. Miles, thou knowest that I have dived into hell,
And sought the darkest places of the fiends;
That with my magic spells great Belcephon
Hath left his lodge and kneeled at my cell;
That three-formed Luna hid her silver looks,
Trembling upon her concave continent.
When Bacon read upon his magic book.
With seven years tossing necromantic charms,
Poring upon dark Hecate's principle,
I have framed out a monstrous head of brass,
That, by the enchanting forces of the devil,
Shall tell out strange and uncouth aphorisms,
And girt fair England with a wall of brass.
Bungay and I have watched these three-score days,
And now our vital spirits crave some rest.
Now, Miles, in thee rests Friar Bacon's weal;
The honor and renown of all his life
Hangs in the watching of this brazen head. * * *
This night thou watch, for ere the morning star
Sends out his glorious glister in the north,
The head will speak; then, Miles, upon thy life,
Wake me, for then, by magic art, I'll work
To aid my seven years' task with excellence. * * *
Draw close the curtains, Miles; now, for thy life,
Be watchful and— . . [*He falls asleep.*

Miles. So! I thought you'd talk yourself asleep anon, and 'tis no marvel, for Bungay in the days, and he in the nights, have watched ten and fifty days. Now this is the night, and 'tis my task and no more. Heaven bless me! what a goodly head it is, and a nose! You talk of *nos* (nose) *autem glorificare;* but *here's* a nose may be called *nos autem populare*—for the people of the parish. Well, I am well furnished with weapons; now, sir, I will get me down by a post, and make it as good as a watchman to wake me if I chance to slumber. [*A great noise of thunder heard.*] Up, Miles, to your task; here's some of your master's hobgoblins abroad.

[Thunder—The head speaks.]

Head. Time is.

Miles. Time *is.* What, Master Brazen-head, have you such a capital nose and answer you with syllables, Time is? Is this my master's cunning to spend seven years study with time is? Well, sir, it may be we shall have some orations anon. I'll watch you as narrowly as ever you were watched.

[Thunder and lightning.]

The Head. Time was.

Miles. Well, Friar Bacon, you have spent your seven years study well, that can make your head speak but two words at once, Time was. Yea, marry, time was when my master was a wise man, but that was before he began to make the brazen head——what! a fresh noise! Take thy pistols in hand, Miles.

[Thunder again.]

The Head. Time is past.

[*Flash of lightning, in which a hand appears with hammer that breaks the head.*]

Miles (in affright). Master! master! Up! your head speaks! There's such a thunder and lightning that I warrant all Oxford is up in arms. Out of your bed; the latter day is come.

Bacon (arousing)—Miles, I come. O passing warily watched! Bacon will make thee next himself in love. When spake the head?

Miles. When spake the head? Did you not say that it should tell strange principles of philosophy? Why, sir, it speaks but two words at a time.

Bacon. Why, villain, has it spoken oft?

Miles. Oft? Ay, marry hath it, thrice; but in all these three times it has uttered only seven words.

Bacon. As how?

Miles. Marry, sir, the first time it said, Time is, as if Fabius Commentator should have pronounced a sentence; then he said, Time was; and the third time, with thunder and lightning, as in great choler, he cried, Time is past.

Bacon. 'Tis past, indeed.
Ay, villain, time is past.
My life, my fame, my glory—all are past.
Bacon, the turrets of thy hope are razed.
Thy seven years' study lieth in the dust,
Thy brazen head lies broken, through a slave
That watched and would not when the head did will.

There is a near approach to the brightness and wit of later English comedy in Greene, and although there is a great deal of rubbish in his writings, there is also much poetry and much ingenuity in the construction of his plots. I have always felt a sympathy with his fate since I read this sentence in some old biography: "It is reported that he was *the first English poet who ever wrote for bread.*"

We could not pass John Lyly by without mention. He seems to have been more respectable in manners and social position than most of this group of playwriters, and he wrote one book, fashionable beyond all others in its day, which gave a new word to the language. This is the romance of *Euphues*, from which the word euphuism is derived. One hardly knows how to define euphuism. The dictionary says it is "a fastidious delicacy of language," but that does not fully express it. It was a style of speaking and writing full of stilted and affected phrases, redundant in comparisons, crowded with foreign and classical allusions—a simple meaning wrapped up in a mass of words. We wonder that it could have been popular with people of sturdy English common sense at any time. Yet in the court of Elizabeth euphuism was so fashionable that all the lords and ladies talked in this affected way, and one of the historians says: "That beauty in court which could not parley euphuism was as little regarded as she which now there speaks not French."

Born 1553. Died 1601.

Yet, in spite of its absurdities, Lyly's book has merit, and does not deserve the abuse that has been thrown upon it by critics who seem to believe it as absurd as the speech of those who imitated it. It is full of good sense, although sometimes expressed in such roundabout manner; and better advice than he gives for the rearing and education of youth has rarely been written. And the book is full of noble sentences, like this:

"It is not descent of birth that maketh gentlemen; not great *manors*, but good manners, that express the image of dignity. There is copper coin of the same stamp that gold is, yet is it not current."

"The wise man liveth as well in a far country as in his own home. It is not the nature of the place, but the disposition of the person, that maketh life pleasant."

"The greatest harm you can do to the envious is to do well."

"If you will be cherished when you be old, be courteous when you be young."

These sentences, gleaned at random from *Euphues*, show

how much there is fine in it, and when I hear it spoken of as a book "which did incalculable mischief by vitiating the taste and corrupting the language," I feel like saying, in the words of a modern writer,* "Have these critics ever read it? If they have, I pity them if they have not found it, in spite of occasional tediousness and pedantry, as brave, righteous, and pious a book as a man need look into."

Euphues must be classed among works of fiction, although it hardly meets any of our ideas of a novel. The chief character in the book is Euphues, a young gentleman of Athens, who writes long letters and keeps up interminable conversations with the other characters, but chiefly with the heroine, Lucilla, with whom he is in love. Bye-and-bye, Lucilla jilts him, which gives him an opportunity to inveigh in the following style against women, in one of his letters to his friend Philautus:

"It is a world to see how commonly we are blinded by the collusions of women, and more enticed by their ornaments being artificial than their proportions being natural. I loathe almost to think on their ornaments and apothecary drugs, the sleeking of their faces and all their slibber sauces, which bring queasiness to the stomach and disquiet to the mind.

"Take from them their periwigs, their paintings, their jewels, their rolls, their boulstrings, and thou shalt soon perceive a woman is the least part of herself. When they once be robbed of their robes, then will they appear so odious, so ugly, so monstrous, that thou wilt rather think them serpents than saints, and so like hags that thou wilt fear rather to be enchanted than enamored. Look in their closets and thou wilt find there an apothecary's shop of sweet confections, a surgeon's box of sundry salves, a pedlar's pack of new-fangles. Besides all this, their shadows, their spots, their lawns, their ruffs, their rings. If one of these things severally be not of force to move thee, yet all of them jointly should mortify thee. * * * And yet, Philautus, I would not that all women should take pepper in the nose, in that I have disclosed the legerdemain of a few, for well I know none will wince unless she be galled, neither any be offended unless she be guilty."

Although *Euphues* is the most famous of Lyly's works, yet

* Charles Kingsley.

he was noted in his time as a writer of plays. Several of these had appeared before Shakspeare began to be known as a dramatist. The best of his plays is *Campaspe*. Its principal characters are Alexander of Macedon and the painter Apelles. Alexander is in love with a beautifnl young girl, Campaspe, whom he has taken captive in war, and employs Apelles to paint her portrait. The artist also loves Campaspe, and when the monarch discovers this he hesitates for a moment between jealousy and generosity, but at last resigns her to Apelles. It is a very pretty plot, although simple and without strong dramatic interest. It is written, not in blank verse, but in prose, in sentences that remind one of *Euphues*, but Lyly proved that he was a poet by the beautiful lyrics found in his plays. One of the most perfect of these is the song of *Cupid and Campaspe*, sung by the painter Apelles as he works at his easel on the portrait of Campaspe:

"Cupid and my Campaspe played
At cards for kisses; Cupid paid.
He staked his quiver, bow and arrows,
His mother's doves and team of sparrows;
Loses them, too; then down he throws
The coral of his lip, the rose
Growing on 's cheek (but none knows how).
With these the crystal of his brow,
And then the dimple in his chin—
All these did my Campaspe win.
At last he staked her both his eyes—
She won, and Cupid blind did rise.
O, Love, has she done this to thee?
What will alas! become of me?"

TALK XXII.

On Christopher Marlowe, the Great Predecessor of Shakspeare.

The greatest of all the dramatic poets who wrote before Shakspeare, was Christopher Marlowe, whom his friends familiarly called "Kit." He was a boon companion of Greene and Peele, a little younger than either, born, indeed, in the very year with our great Shakspeare. But he began to write much earlier, and when he died only three or four of Shakspeare's works had appeared.

Born 1564. Died 1593.

As soon as Marlowe left college he went to London and began to write for the theater; very likely he acted too, as most of the play-writers did when they failed to earn a livelihood by the pen alone. He must have begun to write early, for he was the author of at least six plays, and took part, probably, in the writing of several others, yet he was only twenty-nine when his life came to a disreputable and tragic end. A quarrel arose between himself and a boon companion named Francis Archer, in a tavern which they frequented, and, as Marlowe angrily drew his dagger, Archer seized his hand and stabbed him in the head, so that, according to an old rhyme which tells the story,

> "He groaned, and word spake never more;
> Pierced through both eye and brain."

Marlowe has a bad reputation, although whether it was entirely deserved it would be difficult now to tell. The Puritans had begun in his time to wage a fierce war against the stage and all dramatic writings, and they lost no opportunity to hold up to horror all persons who were concerned

in plays or play-writing. The manner of Marlowe's death added to the bad odor in which he was held by his enemies, but we must remember that this was an age in which tavern quarrels and street broils were not infrequent, and better men than Marlowe were quick to draw daggers, and to use them. Although he was no better, he may have been no worse than many other men whose names have not been so roughly handled. However this may be, a strong moral was drawn from Marlowe's death by the opposers of the drama, and a ballad on the subject, called *The Atheist's Tragedy*, in which Marlowe is called *Wormall*, ends with this stanza:

> "Take warning, ye that plays do make,
> And ye that them do act.
> Desist in time, for Wormall's sake,
> And think upon his fact."

The first play by Marlowe, of which we have any knowledge, is *The First Part* of *Tamburlaine the Great*. It is claimed by the most careful students that this is the first play in which blank verse was used in a public theater. Before this, the plays had been either in prose or rhyme, blank verse having been used only in private performances at court, or before college societies. You will be interested, therefore, to read a little of this verse, which is thus claimed to be the beginning of English dramatic poetry.

Tamburlaine, the hero of the play, is a shepherd, who has taken up arms with design to become King of Persia. He is, like all Marlowe's heroes, a man of boundless ambition and courage. These lines which I quote are from his speech to Theridamos, one of the captains of the King of Persia, who has been sent to take Tamburlaine prisoner, and the great warrior thus persuades the envoy of the King to desert his master and follow the fortunes of the great Tamburlaine:

> "*Tamburlaine.* In thee, thou valiant man of Persia,
> I see the folly of thy emperor;
> Art thou but captain of a thousand horse,
> That by characters graven in thy brows,

And by thy martial face and stout aspect,
Deserves to have the leading of a host?
Forsake thy King, and do but join with me,
And we will triumph over all the world.
I hold the Fates, bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about,
And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
Than Tamburlaine be slain or overcome.
Draw forth thy sword, thou mighty man at arms,
Intending but to raze my charmed skin,
And Jove himself will stretch his hand from heaven
To ward the blow and shield me safe from harm.

* * * *

If thou wilt stay with me, renowned man,
And lead thy thousand horse, with my conduct,
Besides thy share of this Egyptian prize,
Three thousand horse shall sweat with martial spoil
Of conquered kingdoms, and of cities sacked;
We both will walk upon the lofty cliffs,
And Christian merchants, that with Russian sterns
Plough up huge furrows in the Caspian Sea,
Shall sail to us as lords of all the lakes;
Both we will reign as consuls of the earth,
And mighty kings shall be our senators.
Jove sometimes masked in a shepherd's weed,
And by those steps that he has scaled the heavens,
May we become immortal as the gods.
Join with me now in this my mean estate,
(I call it mean, because, being yet obscure,
The nations far removed admire me not,)
And when my name and honor shall be spread
As far as Boreas claps his brazen wings,
Or fair Bootes sends his cheerful light,
Then shalt thou be competitor with me,
And sit with Tamburlaine in all his majesty."

This speech is in a lofty spirit of boasting, but it showed the power of what Ben Jonson called "*Marlowe's mighty line.*"

Of all Marlowe's plays, none has been so famous as *Faustus*, which has the same plot that the great German poet, Goethe, used afterwards. There is great power in

Marlowe's play, although in parts it is very weak and puerile. Faust sells his soul to Mephistopheles on condition that for twenty-four years Mephistopheles shall be his servant and do his will. The finest passage in Faust is the close of the play, in which he awaits the fiends who are to bear away his soul to eternal torment. As the clock slowly strikes eleven, Faust is left in his chamber alone. Faust speaks:

"Ah! Faustus,
Now hast thou but one bare hour to live.
And then thou must be damned perpetually!
Stand still, yon ever-moving spheres of heaven,
That time may cease, and midnight never come!
Fair Nature's eye, rise, rise again, and make
Perpetual day; or let this hour be but
A year, a month, a week, a natural day,
That Faustus may repent and save his soul.
* * * * * *

[The clock strikes the half-hour.]

Ah! the half-hour is past; 'twill all be past anon.
Oh, God! if Thou wilt not have mercy on my soul,
Impose some end to my incessant pain;
Let Faustus live in hell a thousand years,
A hundred thousand, and *at last* be saved!
Ah, no end is limited to damned souls!
Why wert thou not a creature wanting soul?
Oh! why is that immortal which thou hast?
* * * all beasts are happy,
For when they die,
Their souls are soon dissolved in elements;
But mine must live, still to be plagued in hell.

[Clock strikes twelve.]

It strikes! it strikes! Now, body, turn to air,
Or Lucifer will bear thee quick to hell!

[Storm of thunder and lightning.]

Oh, soul, be changed to little water drops;
And fall into the ocean, ne'er be found!

[At this the devils enter and bear off Faustus.]

The hero of another of Marlowe's plays, *The Jew of Malta*, is frequently compared with Shakspeare's Shylock, al-

though there is really very little likeness between the characters in the two plays. *Barabas, The Jew of Malta*, is, like Shylock, a man of intellect and power. He says of himself: "Barabas is born to better chance, and framed of finer mould than common men." But he does not excite our sympathy as Shylock does. His cruelty is overdrawn, his malignity becomes vulgar, and the heaped-up horrors of the play become at last ridiculous. But, although the play is unequal, there are strong passages in it. When the governor of Malta has taken from the Jews half their property to fill the treasury of the city, and has ordered that Barabas be stripped of half his wealth, the old Israelite thus hurls curses after him:

"The plagues of Egypt and the curse of Heaven,
Earth's barrenness, and all men's hatred,
Inflict upon him, thou great primus motor,
And here, upon my knees striking the earth,
I ban their souls to everlasting pains
And extreme torture of the fiery deep,
That thus have dealt with me in my distress.
1st Jew. Yet, Brother Barabas, remember Job.
Barabas. What tell you me of Job? I wot his wealth
Was written thus: he had seven thousand sheep,
Three thousand camels, and two hundred yoke
Of laboring oxen; but for every one of these,
Had they been valued at indifferent rate,
I had at home, and in mine Argosie,
As much as would have bought his beasts and him,
And yet have left enough to live upon.
2d Jew. Good Barabas, be patient.
Barabas. I pray you leave me in my patience.
You, that were ne'er possessed of wealth, are pleased with want;
But give him liberty at least to mourn
That in a field, amidst his enemies,
Doth see his soldiers slain, himself disarmed,
And knows no means for his recovery."

There is, I am sure, great power in the passages I have quoted, and when we remember they were written by a man so young, when the English drama existed only in very crude forms, and without passion or dramatic interest, we must ad-

mire a genius of such originality, which blazed so highly and went out so suddenly.

Besides these which I have mentioned, Marlowe wrote the *Tragedy of Edward II*, which has reminded some readers of Shakspeare's *Richard II*, principally because the fate of these two kings has so much resemblance. There are also two other plays of *Lust's Dominion* and the *Massacre of Paris*, which are doubtfully ascribed to him, both of which are very much in his style. In nearly all these plays his heroes, like Barabas and Tamburlaine, are men of great thirst for power and unbridled ambition. Perhaps Marlowe painted in them the passions that ruled in his own breast, and that he, like Faust, was consumed with insatiate desire for dominion over the whole realm of knowledge. In spite of his faults, none of the dramatists before Shakspeare approach him in genius, and I leave him regretfully, wishing we might dwell longer on his merits.

There are several other names well noted in their time, which meet us on the threshold of the Shakspearean age. Thomas Kyd was one of the popular play-writers in London when Shakspeare first began to try his hand at authorship, and his *Spanish Tragedy* was then delighting the theater-goers. Thomas Nash, also a play-writer, and a friend of Marlowe and Green, had produced his play of *Will Somers' Last Will and Testament*, in a barn on the outskirts of London, when the players were driven outside the city by the raging of the plague. In this old play of Will Somers is a most musical little spring-song which will give you an idea of Nash's quality as a poet. There are several songs in this play, and the songs are much the finest part of the work:

"Spring, the sweet spring, is the year's pleasant king;
Then blooms each thing, then maids dance in ring,
Cold doth not sting, the pretty birds do sing,
    Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

"The palm and may, make country houses gay;
Lambs frisk and play, the shepherds pipe all day,

And hear we aye birds tune their pretty lay,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!

"The fields breathe sweet, the daisies kiss our feet,
Young lovers meet, old wives a sunning sit;
In every street these tunes our ears do greet,
Cuckoo, jug, jug, pu-we, to-witta-woo!"

Another poet, Thomas Lodge, wrote several plays, a number of them in conjunction with other play-writers. His best work, for us, is a beautiful story called *Rosalynde; or Eupues' Golden Legacy*, a really golden bequest, because Shakspeare used it for the plot of that most beautiful play, *As You Like It*. Lodge early gave up writing stories and dramas, and, afterwards became a physician, writing a treatise on the plague which was raging in London. He could not have found its cure, for he died of the disease shortly afterwards.

Birth unknown. Died 1625.

I have thus briefly touched upon the chief names among the dramatists who heralded Shakspeare; the poets who were at work for the stage when he first came to London. They were nearly all men of fiery imagination, using language with a freedom and unconventionality which no modern poet could venture upon, and which would not, to-day, be tolerated. These men set the fashion for later poets, and helped establish the rules laid down by our grammarians and dictionary-makers; now-a-days words have each their rank and place in language, and whoever dares misuse one is arraigned by a host of verbal critics.

The most fortunate thing in the beginning of the English drama is, that these early writers were not afraid to be original. They adhered to no models, and did not follow the rules of the elder literature of Greece and Rome. True, they were men of much classical learning, and their verses are stuffed full of classical allusions, which show this. Greene's milk-maids and farmers talk of Apollo and Diana, and other gods and goddesses, as if they were fellow-servants, and the names of ancient myth and history constantly

appear in Marlowe and Peele. Yet, in spite of this, they kept dramatic poetry free from bonds. They gave it a living reality, and put into it human passion. In a word, they made a *national* drama.

The English drama owes its best part to that sturdy Teutonic spirit underlying all that is best in our literature, which resented too much innovation on its native quality, and would speak out from itself, in spite of fashions of speech regarded as more exact or more comely. These earlier dramatists were fit precursors of Shakspeare, who, great as he was, owed much to the fact that such men preceded him.

TALK XXIII.

On William Shakspeare, His Life and Character, and Works.

William Shakspeare is the greatest name in English poetry, and ranks among the greatest of the world. Born 1564. The Greek Homer, the Italian Dante, the English Died 1616. Shakspeare and the German Goethe are four grand figures that stand out pre-eminent in the history of the world's literature for three thousand years.

Of the man Shakspeare very few facts are truly known; but this concerns us less, because it is with the poet, and not with the man, that we have to deal. He was born at Stratford-on-the-Avon, in Warwickshire, of a respectable family, his father a well-to-do townsman, who held several offices. He went to the grammar school in his native town, probably till he was about fourteen. Then some of his biographers think he may have been a lawyer's clerk, as that would explain the close knowledge of law terms that he shows in his plays; others think that he taught school; others still, that he was an apprentice to a butcher. Whether he

followed any or all of these callings, is not certain; the only fact of which we are certain, between the time of his leaving school and going to London, is that at eighteen he married Anne Hatheway, who lived in the village of Shottery, a mile or two from Stratford, and that after the birth of three children, and when he was about twenty-three years old, he went to London to seek his fortune.

There is an old story that he went deer-poaching at Charlecote, the estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, a few miles from Stratford, and that his arrest and trial for this trespass were the direct cause of his leaving his native town. But this story has been doubted; and so has another tradition that when he reached London he first gained a scanty living by holding horses outside the theatre for gentlemen who came to see the play. Whether either of these stories is true makes very little difference in this history. It is certain that he was not long in London before he was employed in a company of players in some capacity. He was an actor as well as a play-writer; we do not know which calling he took up first. It seems to me probable that his first works might have been written in conjunction with other playwrights, or that he first revised and adapted other men's works to meet the demands of stage action. In such kind of attempts he could prove his ability before trying to produce any drama entirely original. In any case his rise was rapid. He had not been in London five years before he began to be known as a writer and to be heard of in the company of the best wits of the time; in ten years he was able to buy one of the finest estates in his native town; three or four years later, he bought more lands, gardens, and orchards in Stratford, and finally, in the year 1616, when he was fifty-two years old, a prosperous man, in the full vigor of life, he died suddenly of a fever, and was buried in the little church in his native town. This bald outline of a life is all we have of our greatest poet.

There has been much question and debate about the amount of Shakspeare's learning, and although there are

some ingenious arguments to prove him a scholar, it must be admitted that his opportunities for education were not equal to most other literary men of his time. He was fourteen when he left the town grammar school, and he never entered college. But we may be sure he did not miss any of his opportunities. I fancy him an eager reader of all the books he could lay hands on. The popular ballads, the old chronicles, the tales translated from Latin, French and Italian, which were printed in small, paper-covered pamphlets, and called chap-books, or *cheap*-books, all these would furnish food for his devouring imagination. He had, also, I can easily fancy, an eager ear, which was no less a source of culture than the eye. No speech of the clever people he met in London fell unheeded when Shakspeare was by. In the circle into which he came, conversations on poetry and philosophy, the new theories in science and medicine, on all the great events of the time, must have been constantly going on about him. He must have heard the new philosophy of Bacon discussed by the most thoughtful men of the day; he could hear the cases of law argued by the most astute lawyers; the literatures of Greece and Rome were quoted from and discussed by the scholars from the university, who, like himself, were getting their bread by writing for the stage; the brilliant actions of Queen Elizabeth's soldiers and sailors were the theme of discourse at every tavern; the romantic voyages of English ships in the attempts at the settlement of this untried continent, were recounted by men who took part in them. Never was any age richer in ideas than the age of Shakspeare, the very air swarmed with them, and all that he heard he gathered up into the vast storehouse of his brain and reproduced in lines that have since made the world wonder at the boundless depths, the prophetic heights of his knowledge. This was GENIUS, that could make even a common-place suggestion that had fallen from the lips of some of his associates wear in his verse an air of prophecy. One of the most potent qualities of all the great poets of the world is this

power of absorbing all that touches them, of appropriating from every channel all that can feed and enrich them, and this quality was Shakspeare's in an unusual degree.

When he died, in 1616, his plays had never been collected in a volume, and, indeed, many of them had never been printed at all. This has been a matter of wonder among many critics, and from this some have argued that Shakspeare was quite indifferent to his own fame. I do not believe this theory to be true. If we can judge anything of his personal feeling from his sonnets, where he seems to have revealed *himself* as he never does in his plays, his genius had that consciousness of its own power which great genius almost always possesses. Again and again he claims the immortality of his lines, as when he says:

> "Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
> Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme,
> But you shall shine more bright in these contents,
> That unswept stone be smeared with sluttish time."
>
> SONNET LV.

> "Or I shall live, your epitaph to make,
> Or you survive, when I in earth am rotten.
> From *hence* your memory death cannot take,
> Altho' in me each part will be forgotten.
> Your name from *hence* immortal life shall have.
> Tho' I once gone to earth must die,
> The earth can yield us but a common grave,
> While you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
> *Your monument shall be my gentle verse,*
> *Which eyes not yet created shall o'er read,*
> *And tongues to be, your being shall rehearse.*
> *When all the breathers of this world are dead,*
> *You still shall live, such virtue has my pen,*
> *Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.*"
>
> SONNET LXXXI.

In many like instances in his sonnets does he show that he did not esteem himself too lightly.

It seems very reasonable to believe, therefore, that the latest work of his life, when he had gained fortune and leisure, would have been to revise and edit all his works.

Up to the time of his death it would have been unbusiness-like and unprofitable to have interrupted his work for the theater (a theater in which he held a pecuniary interest) in order to print his plays and so destroy in a measure their acting value. Shakspeare, by all the arguments we can draw from his life, was a thrifty, business-like man, interested in the accumulation of property and the building up of a name and an estate in his native Stratford. It would have been both foolish and improvident to have cut off so suddenly a good income. But when he settled down at home in Stratford, he was still in the vigor and prime of life, with leisure before him to revise and re-write all his plays in his own careful and painstaking way, and so put them into the shape in which he would have given them to the future. I can not doubt he meant to do this, when that churl, death, came in, stopped his intent, and so we lost one of the best legacies the past could have made us—*The Plays of Shakspeare, edited by himself.*

Seven years after Shakspeare's death, John Heminge and Henry Condell, two of Shakspeare's fellow-actors, who had known him well during his career as player and dramatist, published the first edition of his works in a volume containing thirty-six plays. This is known as the "folio of 1623," and is the most valuable for students of Shakspeare. Previously eighteen of these plays had been printed separately in little books called *quartos.* As the popular plays were withheld from publication while they were performed on the stage, many of the dramas were taken down in a kind of short-hand at the theater and printed by some publisher, who would get them by foul means, if he could not by fair payment. Such copies must necessarily be full of mistakes, and, as the actors, and especially the clowns, often spoke much more than was set down for them, there were often gross interpolations in these unauthorized editions. Some of these quartos had been more than once printed, and of the thirty-six plays eighteen had appeared in this way.

Heminge and Condell, therefore, had for the basis of their work the best of these quartos; such stage copies of the plays as they could get, and that intimate knowledge of the dramas, in which, as members of the company that first produced them, they must often have performed different parts. But even with their best care, these first editors of Shakspeare, to whom we all owe a debt of gratitude, could not avoid some mistakes in a work so full of difficulties.

To these thirty-six plays, of which I have elsewhere given* a list, the play of *Pericles* was afterwards added, making thirty-seven, the number now usually included in his works. But besides these thirty-seven, there are a number of others which have been claimed as Shakspeare's. There are three old plays still in existence, which were printed in quarto, with Shakspeare's name on the title page, and there are several others, with the initials W. Sh., or W. S., which Heminge and Condell did not put in their edition. Probably these plays are not Shakspeare's, but were printed with his name by some publisher who knew Shakspeare's popularity as a writer would be likely to sell any play that bore his name, or even his initials, on the title-page.

It was also a common custom, at this time, for writers for the stage to unite together to produce a play. There are some plays which have as many as five writers concerned in them, and two and three is a very common number in this joint authorship. The *Two Noble Kinsmen*, a play found among Beaumont and Fletcher's works, bore the name of Fletcher and Shakspeare as authors; and the play of *Henry VIII*, in Shakspeare's works, had the name of Shakspeare and Fletcher again as joint authors. Thus you will see that it is quite probable that some plays may have been put among Shakspeare's works of which he was only the writer in part, and that others may have been left out in which Shakspeare may have had some share with other writers. A number of

* See list of Shakspeare's plays, p. 444. *Pericles* was added to the 3d edition, 1664.

the thirty-seven plays which we now call Shakspeare's are thus under dispute.

First in doubtfulness comes *Titus Andronicus*, of which I shall say for my own part, I do not think he wrote any part of it.* It is also believed by many scholars that only the first scenes in *Pericles* are by Shakspeare, and that *Timon of Athens* is an alteration or adaptation of an old play.

The *Taming of the Shrew* is certainly founded on an older play of the same title, which it strikingly resembles in incident. As to the *Three Parts of Henry VI*, they are mostly all under dispute, some critics believing that he did not write the first part, and that the *Second and Third Parts* are alterations of two old plays which still exist in evidence; while others claim that he wrote all three, and that the older plays are his own earlier version of the plays which he afterwards finished and revised more carefully. There has been a great deal written on both sides on all these plays, and most of the disputed points must forever remain undecided, or only a matter of individual opinion, and many lines which lie within the covers of his plays will be read a little doubtfully.

With regard to the sources for the plots of the plays, our knowledge is clearer. We know from whence most have been derived, and from this evidence it would seem that Shakspeare rarely invented his plot. He took them wherever he found them—in old poems, stories, translations from French or Italian; in the old Roman or current English history, wherever he could find a dramatic incident. In Holinshed's Chronicle History he found many a hint. There he read

* I have for a long time believed that *Titus Andronicus* was written by the same poet who wrote *Lust's Dominion*, a play sometimes ascribed to Marlowe. The hero of both plays is a Moor, and there is a general resemblance, while some lines are strikingly alike, as for instance:

> And do not now with quarrels shake the state,
> Which is already too much ruinate.
>
> *Lust's Dominion.*

> Then afterwards to order well the state,
> That like events may ne'er it ruinate.
>
> *Titus Andronicus.*

of the troubled reign of Duncan of Scotland; his murder by Macbeth; the appearance of the three witches, and the fight between Macduff and Macbeth. In Plutarch's Lives he read of great Cæsar's assassination, the conspiracy and death of Brutus, as well as the loves of Anthony and Cleopatra. In some charming novels by Greene and by Thomas Lodge, he got the plots for *Winter's Tale* and *As You Like It.* Thus the eye of the dramatist was quick to see in all places whatever would serve his purpose. The inventive power of the novelist either he did not have, or did not care to use. I sometimes fancy that the lack of this power stimulated the *power* of the dramatist—that he could better work the men and women of his imagination, when, like the men and women of the real world, they were controlled by a destiny which he had not shaped for them.

From this slight glance I have given you of his methods, you will see that Shakspeare was a busy, hard-worked man, absorbed and interested in affairs which filled his life for over twenty years. While so many of the other poets, like Greene, Peele and Marlowe, lived and died in drunkenness and misery, Shakspeare was a prosperous shareholder in the theater, where he was also an actor. While busy with his own work for the stage, he was interested in revising and criticising the works of other men; and all this time he was building up a good name and estate in his native town, which was no doubt the main purpose of his life. The greatest poet of his age, he was also a practical man, with a breadth of intellect which could include the details of the petty affairs of life.

In studying Shakspeare, go first of all to his works, and not to critics. To know thoroughly Shakspeare's plays with appreciative knowledge, would be of itself a liberal education. Even if you should read thoroughly only four such plays as *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Julius Cæsar* and *As You Like It*, you would have in your mind a treasure which would be priceless.

TALK XXIV.

EXTRACTS FROM SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS — RICHARD II; HAMLET; THE TEMPEST.

IN illustration of Shakspeare's poetry, I am going to give extracts from plays written at different periods. First, from *Richard II*, which was written in the earlier period of his career; then from *Hamlet*, which was probably produced in the middle of his life as author; and, finally, from *The Tempest*, which is one of his latest, if not his very latest production. The selection from *Richard II* is that in which John of Gaunt, the uncle of the king, lying at point of death, calls for Richard, that he may warn him of his misgovernment, which is bringing so many troubles to the realm.

As the scene opens, Gaunt lies on a couch, his brother, Duke of York, standing near:

Gaunt. Will the King come, that I may breathe my last,
In wholesome counsel to his unstaid youth?
York. Vex not yourself, nor strive not with your breath,
For all in vain comes counsel to his ear.
Gaunt. O, but they say the tongues of dying men
Enforce attention, like deep harmony.
Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain;
For they breathe truth, that breathe their words in pain
He, that no more must say, is listened more
Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose,
More are men's ends marked, than their lives before
The setting sun and music at the close—
As the last taste of sweets is sweetest, last
Writ in remembrance, more than things long past.
Tho' Richard my life's counsel would not hear,

My death's sad tale may yet undeaf his ear.

* * * * * *

Methinks I am a prophet now inspired,
And thus, expiring, do foretell of him:
His fierce, rash blaze of riot cannot last;
For violent fires soon burn out themselves.
Small showers last long, but sudden storms are short;
He tires betimes, that spurs too fast betimes;
With eager feeding, food doth choke the feeder.
Light vanity, insatiate comorant,
Consuming means soon preys upon itself.
This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars;
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress, built by Nature for herself
Against infestion and the hand of war;
This happy breed of men, this little world;
This precious stone set in the silver sea,
Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands;
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,

* * * *

This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land—
Dear for her reputation thro' the world—
Is now leased out (I die pronouncing it)
Like to a tenement or pelting farm;
England, bound in by the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune, is now bound in with shame,
With inky blots and rotten parchment bonds;
That England, that was wont to conquer others,
Hath made a shameful conquest of itself.

This, as I have said before, is from one of Shakspeare's earlier plays. You will notice, in studying his works, that when Shakspeare was younger he very often used rhymed couplets, as in this extract, instead of blank verse. As he grew older he used rhyme less and less. In *Hamlet* and *As You Like It*, which he wrote about the middle of his life, there are few rhymes, except occasionally a couplet at the close of a scene; in *The Tempest* and *Winter's Tale*,

which are among his latest plays, he almost altogether discarded rhymes.

Hamlet is one of Shakspeare's grandest plays; probably no other is so much acted, read and studied as this one. It is difficult to select from a play which is so perfect as a whole, but as an example of Shakspeare's wonderful humor, which could touch at the same time both tears and laughter, I have selected the scene in which two grave-diggers are making a grave for Ophelia, who had gone mad, and in her madness was drowned. The two grave-diggers enter the churchyard, spades in hand; the first is a jolly old man who has been so long at his business that it is pure custom with him; the second is younger, but less active in wit than his old companion. The old man begins thus:

1st Grave-digger. Is she to be buried in Christian burial, that willfully seeks her own salvation?*

2nd Grave-digger. I tell thee she is; therefore make her grave, straight; the crowners hath sate on her, and finds it Christian burial.

1st Grave-digger. How can that be, unless she drowned herself in her own defence?

2nd Grave-digger. Why, 'tis found so.

1st Grave-digger. It must be *se offendendo*; it cannot be else; for here lies the point: If I drown myself wittingly, it argues an act, and an act has three branches—it is to act, to do and to perform; argal,† she drowned herself wittingly.

2nd Grave-digger. Nay, but hear you, good man delver,—

1st Grave-digger. Give me leave. Here lies the water; good: here stands the man; good: if the man go to this water and drown himself, it is, will he, nill he, he goes; mark you that; but if the water come to him and drown him, he drowns not himself; argal, he, that is not guilty of his own death, shortens not his own life.

2nd Grave-digger. But is this law?

1st Grave-digger. Ay, marry is it, crowner's quest law.

2nd Grave-digger. Will you ha' the truth on't? If this had not been a gentlewoman, she should have been buried out of Christian burial.

1st Grave-digger. Why there thou say'st. And the more pity, that

* Suicides could not have Christian burial, or burial on consecrated ground, and there is a doubt whether Ophelia was the causer of her death by drowning.

† The grave-digger uses argal for ergo—therefore.

great folk should have countenance in this world to drown or hang themselves more than their even Christian.* Come, my spade! There is no ancient gentlemen but gardeners, ditchers and grave-makers: they hold up Adam's profession.

2nd Grave-digger. Was he a gentleman?

1st Grave-digger. He was the first that ever bore arms.

2d. Why he had none.

1st. What, art thou a heathen? How dost thou understand the Scripture? The Scripture says Adam digged. Could he dig without arms? I'll put another question to thee; if thou answereth not to the purpose, confess thyself—

2d. Go to.

1st. What is he that builds stronger than either the mason, the shipwright or the carpenter?

2d. The gallows-maker, for that frame outlives a thousand tenants.

1st. I like thy wit well, in good faith; the gallows does well; but *how* doth it well? It does well to those that do ill. Now thou dost ill to say the gallows is built stronger than the church; argal, the gallows may do well to thee. To 't again, come.

2d. Who builds stronger than a mason, a shipwright or a carpenter?

1st. Ay, tell me that, and unyoke.†

2d. Marry, now I can tell.

1st. To 't.

2d. Mass. I cannot tell.

[*Enter Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark, and his friend, Horatio, at a distance.*]

1st. Cudgel thy brains no more about it, for your dull ass will not mend his pace with beating; and when you are asked this question next, say the *grave-maker.* The houses that he makes last till doomsday. Go, get thee to Yaughan; fetch me a stoup‡ of liquor.

[*2nd grave-digger exit.*]

1st. [*Digs and sings*]—

In youth when I did love, did love,
Methought 't was very sweet
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought, there was nothing meet.

Hamlet. Hath this fellow no feeling for his business, that he sings at grave-making?

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* Even Christian—an equal Christian, though it might not be equal in rank.

† Unyoke—*Get to work.*

‡ A jug of liquor.

Horatio. Custom hath made it in him a property of easiness.

Hamlet. 'T is e'en so; the hand of little employment hath the daintier sense.

1*st Grave-digger*—[*sings*]:

But age, with his stealing steps,
Hath clawed me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me intil the land
As if I had never been such. [*Throws up a skull.*

Hamlet. That skull had a tongue in it, and could sing once; how the knave jowls* it to the ground as if it were Cain's jawbone, that did the first murder! It might be the pate of a politician that this ass now o'erreaches—one that could circumvent God—might it not?

Horatio. It might, my lord.

Hamlet. Or of a courtier, which could say, "Good morrow, sweet lord! How dost thou, good lord?" This might be my lord Such-a-one, that praised my lord Such-a-one's horse when he meant to beg it; might 't not?

Horatio. Ay, my lord.

Hamlet. Why, e'en so; and now, my Lady Worm's; chapless† and knocked about the mazzard‡ with a sexton's spade; there's fine revolution, if we had trick to see't. Did these bones cost no more the breeding, but to play at loggats‖ with them? Mine ache to think on't. [*Grave-digger throws up another skull.*]

Hamlet. There's another! Why might not that be the scull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce§ with a dirty shovel and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries; is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? the very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box, and must the inheritor himself have no more? * * * I will speak to this fellow [*to the grave-digger.*] Whose grave is this, sir?

1*st Grave-digger.* Mine, sir.

Hamlet. I think it be thine, indeed, for thou liest in it.

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* Jowls—*throws.*

† Chapless—*without flesh on the jaws.*

‡ Mazzard—*the head.*

‖ Loggats—*a game played by throwing about pieces of wood*

§ Scouce—*scull, or head.*

1st grave-digger. You lie out on 't, sir, and therefore 'tis not yours; for my part, I do not lie in 't, and yet tis mine. * * *

Hamlet. What man dost thou dig it for?

1st grave-digger. For no man, sir.

Hamlet. What woman, then?

1st grave-digger. For none neither.

Hamlet. Who is to be buried in it?

1st grave-digger. One that was a woman, sir. But, rest her soul, she 's dead.

Hamlet. How absolute the knave is! We must speak by the card, or equivocation will undo us. By the Lord! Horatio, these three years I have taken note of it, the age is grown so picked * that the toe of the peasant comes so near the heel of the courtier he galls his kibe.† * * *

1st grave-digger.—[*picking up a skull*]—Here 's a skull now; this skull hath lain in the earth three-and-twenty years.

Hamlet. Whose was it?

1st grave-digger. A pestilence on him for a mad rogue! a' poured a flagon of Rhenish on my head once. This same skull, sir: this same skull, sir, was Yorick's skull, the king's jester.

Hamlet. This!

1st grave-digger. E'en that.

Hamlet. Let me see. [*Takes the skull*]. Alas! poor Yorick! I knew him, Horatio; a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy; he hath borne me on his back a thousand times; and now how abhorred in my imagination is it; my gorge rises at it. Here hung those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft. Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table in a roar? Not one now to mock your own jeering! Quite chap-fallen! Now get you to my lady's chamber, and tell her, let her paint an inch thick, to this favor she must come; make her laugh at that!

One needs to read over this scene many times to see how much there is in it—to detect all the wit, humor, pathos and profound moralizing.

The *Tempest* is one of Shakspeare's very latest works. It is a play of magic and fairy, more so than any other, except *Midsummer Night's Dream.* Prospero, the Duke of Milan, who has been banished to a distant

* Picked—*So smart, or sharp.*

† Kibe—*A chilblain, or chapped heel.*

island in the seas, has there pursued the study of magic, and has for his assistant a sprite of the air, the tricksy Ariel. By the aid of Ariel, Prospero has raised a violent storm, in which he has drawn the fleet of the King of Naples into an inlet of the isle. Among the attendants of the King, on board his ship, is the unworthy brother of Prospero, who has usurped his dukedom, and sent him adrift on the ocean with his daughter, to find a home on this lonely island. By his magic, Prospero succeeds in getting back his dukedom, and the plays ends with a marriage between his daughter and the son of the King of Naples. This is a bald outline of the beautiful story, which is more interesting to us because Shakspeare wrote it just after reading an account of a strange shipwreck, on one of the Bermuda Isles, of an English fleet, which was bound for the Colony of Virginia. So that it is in that way connected with our country.

The scene which I quote is that in which Prospero, after raising the tempest, tells his daughter the story of their banishment from Milan. The scene is before the cell of Prospero. He enters with his daughter, Miranda:

Miranda. If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them;
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O, I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer! A brave vessel,
Which had no doubt some noble creature in her,
Dashed all to pieces. O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart! Poor souls! they perished.
Had I been any god of power I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The fraughting souls within her.
Prospero. Be collected; no more amazement;
Tell your piteous heart there's no harm done.
Mira. O, woe the day!
Pro. No harm.
I have done nothing but in care of thee,

(Of thee, my dear one! thee my daughter,) who
Art ignorant of what thou art, naught knowing
Of whence I am; nor that I am more better
Than Prospero, master of a full poor cell,
And thy no greater father.

Mira. More to know
Did never meddle with my thoughts.

Pros. 'Tis time
I should inform thee farther. Lend thy hand
And pluck my magic garment from me—so;
Lie there, my art.—Wipe thou thine eyes; have comfort.
[*He lays down his mantle.*
The direful spectacle of the wreck which touched
The very virtue of compassion in thee,
I have, with such provision in mine art,
So safely ordered, that there is no soul—
No, not so much perdition as a hair,
Betid to any creature in the vessel
Which thou heard'st cry, which thou saw'st sink. Sit down,
For now thou must know further.

Mira. You have often
Began to tell me what I am; but stopped
And left me to a bootless inquisition;
Concluding—'stay, not yet.'

Pros. The hour's now come:
The very minute bids thee ope thine ear;
Obey, and be attentive. Canst thou remember
A time before we came into this cell?
I do not think thou canst; for then thou wast not
Out three years old.

Mira. Certainly, sir, I can.

Pros. By what? by any other house or person?
Of anything the image tell me, that
Hath kept with thy remembrance.

Mira. 'Tis far off,
And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
Four or five women once that tended me?

Pros. Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
That this lives in thy mind? What see'st thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou remember'st aught ere thou cam'st here,
How thou cam'st here thou may'st.

Mira. But that I do not.
Pro. Twelve years since, Miranda, twelve years since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan, and
A prince of power. * * *
Mira. Oh, the heavens!
What foul play had we that we came from thence?
Or blessed was 't we did?
Pro. Both, both, my girl;
By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence,
But blessedly holp hither.
Mira. Oh, my heart bleeds
To think of the teen * that I have turned you to,
Which is from my remembrance. Please you, farther.
Pro. My brother and thy uncle, called Antonio,—
I pray thee mark me that a brother should
Be so perfidious—he whom next thyself
Of all the world I loved, and to him put
The manage of my state, as, at that time,
Thro' all the signiories it was the first,
And Prospero the prime duke, being so reputed
In dignity; and for the liberal arts
Without a parallel; those being all my study,
The government I cast upon my brother,
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. Thy false uncle—
Dost thou attend me?
Mira. O, good sir, I do.
Pro. I pray thee mark me.
I thus neglecting worldly ends, all dedicated
To closeless, and the bettering of my mind
With that, which, but by being so retired,
O'erprized all popular rate, in my false brother
Awaked an evil nature; and my trust
Like a good parent, did beget of him
A falsehood, in its contrary as great
As my trust was; which had, indeed, no limit,
A confidence sans bound. He being thus lorded,
Not only with what my revenue yielded,
But what my power might else exact—like one
Who, having unto truth, by telling of it,
Made such a sinner of his memory
To credit his own lie—he did believe

* Teen—*grief, sorrow.*

He was indeed the duke. * * * Hence, his ambition growing—
Dost thou hear?
Mira. Your tale, sir, would cure deafness.
Pro. To have no screen between this part he played
And him he played it for, he needs will be
Absolute Milan. Me, poor man! my library
Was dukedom large enough; of temporal royalties
He thinks me now incapable, confederates
With the king of Naples
To give him annual tribute, do him homage;
Subject his coronet to his crown, and bend
The dukedom, yet unbowed (alas! poor Milan!)
To most ignoble stooping.
Mira. O, the heavens!
Pro. Now the condition.
This King of Naples, being an enemy
To me inveterate, hearkens my brother's suit,
Which was, that he, in lieu of the premises—
Of homage, and I know not how much tribute—
Should presently extirpate me and mine
Out of the dukedom; and confer fair Milan,
With all the honors, on my brother. Whereon
A treacherous army levied, one midnight
Fated to the purpose, did Antonio open
The gates of Milan; and in the dead of darkness
The ministers for the purpose hurried thence,
Me, and they crying self.
Mira. Alack, for pity!
I not remembering how I cried out then,
Will cry it o'er again; it is a hint
That wrings mine eyes to it.
* * * *
Wherefore did they not that hour destroy us?
Pro. Well demanded, wench,
My tale provokes that question. Dear, they durst not—
So dear the love my people bore me—nor set
A mark so bloody on the business; but
With colors fairer painted their foul ends.
In few, they hurried us aboard a bark—
Bore us some leagues to sea; where they prepared
A rotten carcass of boat; not rigged,
Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats
Instinctively have quit it; there they hoist us,

To cry to the sea that roared to us; to sigh
To the winds, whose pity, sighing back again,
Did us but loving wrong.
Mira. Alack! what trouble
Was I then to you.
Pro. O! a cherubim
Thou wast that did preserve me! Thou didst smile,
Infused with a fortitude from Heaven,
When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burden groaned; which raised in me
An undergoing stomach, to bear up
Against what should ensue.

TALK XXV.

On the Dramatic Poets who Lived in Shakspeare's Time: Ben Jonson; Beaumont and Fletcher.

There was no branch of literature which grew so suddenly, and blossomed so richly, as this of dramatic poetry. The names that appear as writers for the stage, between the dates of Shakspeare's birth and death, are almost legion. I do not think it would be worth my pains to tell you, or yours to remember, the names even of half these writers. They had merits, and won some success in their day; but we should hardly be better or wiser for knowing more than a small share of these works. I will only mention the names of some of the greatest writers and their most noted dramas, and give here and there an illustration of the quality of their poetry.

Ben Jonson generally comes next Shakspeare in our thoughts of the drama. *Rare Ben Jonson* he is called in his epitaph in Westminster Abbey. I do not think he should rank next Shakspeare as a poet; and I think his plays neither so poetical nor so powerful as those of some others of his fellows. They were very well adapted to the time for which they were written, although the wit

Born 1573. Died 1637.

which may have been relished in that day, seems to me heavy and dull. The characters in his comedies are distinct and individual, although more like caricatures than real types. He is learned and painstaking in his tragedy, but he never moves me by any touch of sympathy or human interest in his characters or their actions; and I do not believe his plays are now interesting, or will ever again interest anyone, except the scholar who makes the study of literature his special pursuit.

I think, therefore, that the position Jonson gained in his own time, and the reputation he has held ever since, he gained more by certain mental powers he possessed than by the pre-eminence of his poetry. He was a man who, by force of character and a power of criticism, held a strong influence over his age. We shall see in several later periods in literature certain men who, impressing themselves and their opinions vividly upon their fellows, get great supremacy over them. Ben Jonson was something such a power in his age as two centuries later Samuel Johnson was in his. It takes a great man to gain such a position, and, therefore, I do not underrate rare old Ben when I say that he owes as much to this power as to his ability as a poet. Certainly he had good taste and good judgment. He did much towards establishing rules for criticism and language. He is the author of an English grammar, among his other works, which is now a curiosity among text-books.

Ben had known hard fortune when he came to London and began to write for the stage. He was first an actor, like almost all the other play-writers, but does not seem to have been brilliantly successful in this calling. One of his fellows says that "he left bricklaying and took to play-acting," as if he meant to hint that neither trade had gained by Jonson's change. There is an old story to the effect that Jonson sent his first comedy to the theater in which Shakspeare was already a prosperous and influential member. The comedy had been rejected, and the poor author

was going away in discouragement, when Shakspeare asked to look at it, saw its merit, and, through his means, it was performed. This play was, *Every Man in His Humor*, one of the best of Jonson's comedies.*

Jonson and Skakspeare seem to have been good friends, and it was Jonson who wrote that fine epitaph on Shakspeare which predicts that "he was not for a day, but for all time." Jonson was a man of much more learning than Shakspeare, and seems to have been rather vain of his attainments. He says that "Shakspeare had little Latin and less Greek," in a way that intimates how inferior Shakspeare was in that respect to himself. And there is another story—which I tell with proper fear that it may not be true—that Shakspeare was once asked to be sponsor to an infant, and, when some one asked him what he would give his god-child, answered: "I will give him a dozen *Latin* † spoons, and Ben shall translate them." Whether this story be true or not, there was, no doubt, many a sharp passage of wit between Jonson and Shakspeare. They were both members of a club, said to have been founded by Raleigh, which used to meet at Mermaid Tavern, in London, where wit sparkled like fire-works. If the walls of the old tavern could only have reported what had been said within them, what a feast of good things we might have had. But this was before the age of newspapers, and the club at the Mermaid had no reporter to take down their witty speeches.

To return to Johson's plays. His tragedies, *Catiline* and *Sejanus*, have plots drawn from classic sources. His best comedies are *Volpone*, *The Silent Woman*, and *Every Man in His Humor*. To give you an idea of his plots, which in most cases seem (unlike Shakspeare's) to be original in construction, let me tell you the story of *The Silent Woman*.

* This story has been contradicted as improbable, but it is to be noted that any story which sheds a gleam of light on the dull annals of the past is sure to be contradicted, whether it be probable or not, by some dry-as-dust critic.

† Lateen was cheap metal, of which spoons were made.

The hero, a young gentleman, has an eccentric uncle who cannot bear the slightest noise, and has shut himself up from everything which can molest him or break his quiet. He quarrels with his nephew, who expects to be his heir, and resolves to disinherit him and marry. The Silent Woman is accordingly introduced to him—a woman warranted to speak very seldom, and then hardly above a whisper. He is charmed with her and hurries on the wedding, but as soon as the knot is tied the Silent Woman turns into a fluent talker and a termagant. Hosts of friends come in to visit her, a band of instruments enters, playing loudly, and the old man is on the point of going mad when his scapegrace nephew comes to his relief.

He offers to show his uncle a way of release from the marriage if he will sign an agreement by which his fortune, after death, and an annuity during his life, is secured to the nephew. The poor old man gladly assents, and the fact is disclosed that the Silent Woman is a boy who has been trained to play this trick; that the marriage is no marriage, and thus the play ends. No doubt this was very amusing when it was first performed, but it has lost its flavor of wit for our day, and there are few lines in it worth preserving as literature.

Jonson wrote a large number of plays, both comedies and tragedies. He also wrote a number of *Masques* for representation in the court, when he was made poet-laureate to James I, and in these is some of his best poetry. These Masques were generally written for some special occasion of festivity, royal birthdays or marriages, or court celebrations. They were also sometimes performed in the open air in the course of the journey of a sovereign, or his reception at some noble house. You will get a very good idea of a Masque if you read, in Scott's novel of Kenilworth, the account of Elizabeth's visit to the Earl of Leicester, and the Masque performed there.

Although Jonson, in my imagination, does not show a very

fine imagination in his most famous dramas, he is a very musical lyric poet. This is shown in the songs which we find in his plays and in the masques, as well as among his short poems. I presume you have heard this song of his, beginning:—

"Drink to me only with thine eyes
And I will pledge with mine,"

which is one of the most beautiful of the early songs. Here is another song from one of his masques—

To Charis:

"Do but look on her eyes, they do light
All that Love's world compriseth.
Do but look on her hair, it is bright
As Love's star, when it riseth.
Do but mark her forehead, smoother
Than words that soothe her;
And from her arched brows such a grace
Sheds itself thro' the face.

Have you seen but a bright lily grow
Before rude hands have touched it?
Have you marked but the fall of the snow
Before the soil hath smutched it?
Have you felt of the wool of the beaver,
Or swan's down ever?
Or have smelt of the bud of the brier,
Or the nard in the fire?
Or have tasted the bag of the bee?
O so white! O so soft! O so sweet is she!"

It is singular that a man who could write so graceful a lyric should not have put more such poetry into his dramatic writings.

One of the most interesting facts of Jonson's life to us, is a visit he made to the Scottish poet Drummond, in one of the last years of the sixteenth century. In this visit he told many anecdotes, and seems to have expressed his opinions freely, on his contemporaries, their characters and their writings. Drummond, like a thrifty Scotchman, who

let nothing go to waste, kept notes of the visit, and they are printed, so that we all can read this precious gossip. At the end of the notes Drummond gives his opinion of Jonson in these words, with which we will take leave of him:

"Ben Jonson was a great praiser and lover of himself, a contemner and scorner of others, given rather to lose a friend than a jest; jealous of every word and action of those about him, especially when in drink, which is one of the elements in which he lived; a dissembler of the ill parts that reign in him; a bragger of some good that he wanted; thinketh nothing well done, but what he, or some of his friends, have done. He is passionately kind and angry, careless either to gain or keep; vindictive, except he be well answered at himself; interprets best sayings and deeds of others often at the worst. He was for any religion, being versed in both; oppressed with the fancy that hath o'ermastered his reason (a general disease in many poets); his inventions are smooth and easy, but, above all, he excelleth in a translation."

I have told you previously how common it was for two or more authors to unite together in writing works for the theater. There is hardly a play-writer of the age who is not known to have thus collaborated; but there are no two names so closely linked in authorship as those of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. They are always spoken of as a pair of poets, and their works have always been printed under their joint names.

Born 1586. Died 1615-16. Born 1576. Died 1625.

The fact that Beaumont and Fletcher were brothers in heart, as well as brother workers, is one fact that makes them interesting to us, and has helped, no doubt, to bind them so closely together in fame. They were the dearest of friends, lived in one house, shared one apartment and, it is said, wore each other's clothes. Beaumont, who was ten years younger than Fletcher, died almost ten years before his friend. It is thought that an overtasked brain was the cause of his death. Fletcher lived till 1625, the year the plague visited London. He was intending to leave the city, and only waited for a suit of clothes to be sent home by his tailor, when the plague seized him and he died.

There are fifty-two plays in the volumes printed under the joint names of Beaumont and Fletcher; but as Fletcher

outlived Beaumont ten years, many of these plays were written after Beaumont's death; some were entirely Fletcher's work, and others were written with other play-writers of the time—Massinger, Middleton, Rowley and others—his most notable co-worker being Shakspeare, with whom he wrote *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, and aided him also, it is said, in *Henry VIII.** A recent scholar † gives the authorship of the plays thus:

Beaumont and Fletcher, jointly	10
Beaumont, sole author,	2
Fletcher " "	20
Fletcher and Shakspeare,	2
Fletcher and Massinger,	10
Fletcher, with other authors,	8
	52

It is not easy to decide just how the poets' shared their work in these literary partnerships; whether a plot was decided upon, and each took certain scenes as his share, or if each took certain characters in a scene, and wrote their speeches. Beaumont and Fletcher certainly wrote together with great harmony, and their styles very closely blended. Some critic says "that Beaumont excelled in that judgment requisite for forming plots; and Fletcher in the fancy and vivacity which characterizes the poet."

There is a story told of their being once at a tavern, consulting together over a bottle of wine, when Fletcher was heard to whisper mysteriously, "I will kill the King." The horrified waiter would have had them arrested for conspiracy if it had not been clearly proven that the two poets were only concocting the plot of a new play.

You can easily imagine that the fifty-two plays which pass under the title of Beaumont and Fletcher's Works must be

* There is a difference of opinion among critics as to whether Fletcher had any share in *Henry VIII.* I think, however, that any one who studies Shakspeare and Fletcher's style, and has a fine ear for meters, will decide that Fletcher had a share in the play.

† Mr. Fleay.

very unequal in merit since so many different poets had a share in them. The best among them, certainly, are those written jointly by these two authors.

The comedies written by Fletcher alone are very brilliant, the dialogue is natural and sprightly—a model for later comedy style; but among the serious plays, those in which both these poets took part have the highest flights of poetry and strongest dramatic interest. Some of the best are *Philaster*, *Valentinian*, *The Maid's Tragedy*, and *Thierry and Theodoret.* Of all their plays I like best *Philaster*, or *Love Lies Bleeding*, and from this I have made some extracts for you to read.

The plot is of a Prince Philaster, the rightful heir to the crown of Sicily, which crown has been usurped by the reigning King, who desires to leave the succession to his daughter Arethusa. Philaster lives at liberty in Sicily, so much beloved by the people that the King dares not imprison or make away with him, although he is plotting by the marriage of Arethusa with a Spanish Prince to bring in foreign aid to strengthen his power. But Arethusa loves Philaster and is beloved by him, so that in the end all difficulties are solved by their marriage. Philaster is also loved by Euphasia, daughter of one of the lords of Sicily, who has taken the disguise of a page (*Bellario*) to follow Phialster, who guesses neither the secret of her love nor her birth.

Philaster thus describes this page, Bellario, to Arethusa:

I have a boy
Sent by the gods, I hope to this intent,
Not yet seen in the court. Hunting the buck
I found him, sitting by the fountain's side,
Of which he borrowed some to quench his thirst,
And paid the nymph again as much in tears.
A garland lay by him, made by himself
Of many several flowers, bred in the vale,
Stuck in that mystic order, that the rareness
Delighted me. But ever when he turned
His tender eyes upon them, he would weep

As if he meant to make them grow again.
Seeing such pretty helpless innocence
Dwell in his face, I asked him all his story.
He told me that his parents gentle, died,
Leaving him to the mercy of the fields,
Which gave him roots; of the crystal springs,
Which did not stop their courses, and the sun,
Which still, he thanked him, yielded him his light.
Then took he up his garland, and did show
What every flower, as country people hold,
Did signify; and how all, ordered thus,
Expressed his grief. And, to my thoughts, did read
The prettiest lecture of his country art
That could be wished; so that, methought, I could
Have studied it. I gladly entertained him,
Who was as glad to follow, and have got
The trustingest, lovingest, and the gentlest boy
That ever master kept. Him will I send
To wait on you, and bear our hidden love."

The following speech is made by Euphasia when her disguise has been discovered by Philaster and the court, and the former demands of her why she has thus concealed her sex. She answers:

"My father oft would speak
Your worth and virtues; and, as I did grow
More and more apprehensive, I did thirst
To see the man so praised; but yet all this
Was but a maiden longing, to be lost
As soon as found; till sitting in my window
Printing my thoughts in lawn, I saw a god,
I thought, (but it was you) enter our gates.
My blood flew out, and back again as fast
As I had puffed it forth, and sucked it in
Like breath. Then was I called away in haste
To entertain you. Never was a man
Heaved from a sheep-cote to a sceptre, raised
So high in thoughts as I. * * I did hear you talk
Far above singing! After you were gone
I grew acquainted with my heart, and searched
What stirred it so. Alas! I found it love.
Yet could I but have lived

In presence of you, I had had my end,
For this I did delude my noble father
With a feigned pilgrimage, and dressed myself
In habit of a boy; and for I knew
My birth no match for you, I was past hope
Of having you; and understanding well
That when I made discovery of my sex
I could not stay with you, I made a vow,
By all the most religious things a maid
Could call together, never to be known,
While there was hope to hide me from men's eyes,
For other than I seemed, that I might ever
Abide with you. Then sat I by the fount
Where first you took me up."

Like all the rest of these poets, Fletcher wrote very pretty songs, which occur in a number of his plays. Here is one, which is in the same strain as John Milton's *Penseroso*, in which he praises the charm of *Melancholy:*

"Hence all you vain delights,
As short as are the nights
Wherein you spend your folly!
There 's nought in this life sweet,
If men were wise to see 't,
But only melancholy;
O sweetest melancholy.

"Welcome folded arms, and fixed eyes,
A sigh that piercing mortifies,
A look that 's fastened to the ground.
A tongue chained up without a sound,
Fountain-heads and pathless groves,
Places that pale passion loves!
Moonlight walks, where all the fowls
Are warmly housed, save bats and owls!
A midnight bell, a parting groan!
These are the sounds we feed upon;
Then stretch our bones in a still, gloomy valley—
Nothing 's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy."

TALK XXVI.

On George Chapman, John Webster, John Marston, and other Dramatists.

A group of lesser names follow on Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher. One of the oldest among them is George Chapman, the first translator of Homer into English verse. This is his really great title to fame, although he wrote many plays, and was much esteemed as an original poet. He was born seven years before Shakspeare, and lived to be almost eighty. A writer who knew him in his latest days says, "He was much resorted to, latterly, by young persons of parts, as a sort of poetical chronicle, but was very choice whom he admitted to him, and preserved in his own person the dignity of Poetry, which he compared to a flower of the sun, that disdains to open its petals to the light of a smoky candle." This is to my mind a delightful picture of one of the patriarchs of the noble age of Elizabethan literature, holding court to receive the generation who were so unfortunate as to be born later.

Born 1557. Died 1634.

John Marston and John Webster were both poets of higher order than Chapman. Webster wrote two plays, *Vittoria Corombino*, and *Duchess of Malfi*, which I think more powerful, and more dramatically effective in the elements of horror and pathos they possess, than anything produced by these dramatic poets, always excepting Shakspeare. He also wrote a tragedy on the moving story of the Roman maiden, Virginia, and I will quote you the speech of Virginius in which he bids farewell to his daughter, before he sacrifices her—as an example of his pathetic style.

Born 1582? Died 1652.

[Virginius, embracing Virginia.]

"Farewell, my sweet Virginia, never, never,
Shall I taste fruit of the most blessed hope
I had in thee. Let me forget the thought
Of thy most pretty infancy, when first
Returning from the wars, I took delight
To rock thee in my target; when my girl
Would kiss her father in his burganet
Of glittering steel, hung round his armed neck,
And, viewing the bright metal, smile to see
Another fair Virginia smile on thee;
And when my wounds have smarted, I have sung
With an unskilful, yet a willing voice,
To bring my girl asleep."

Marston is celebrated for his grim and satirical humor, which he shows forcibly in *The Malcontent*, the most noted, or best known, of all his dramas, but the same spirit appears in all he wrote. Like Shakspeare's fool, he "rails on lady Fortune in good set terms." One of the characters in his play of *What You Will* says "Fortune is blind," on which the hero cries fiercely,

Born 1575.
Died 1624.

"You lie, you lie!
"None but a madman would deem Fortune blind.
How can she see to wound desert so nice.
Just in the speeding place? to girt lewd brows
With honor's wreath? Ha! Fortune blind? away.
How can she blinded then so rightly see
To starve rich worth and glut iniquity?"

And another speech from the same character:

"Love! hang love!
It is the abject outcast of the world.
Hate all things; hate the world, thyself, all men;
Hate knowledge; strive not to be overwise;
It drew destruction into Paradise;
Hate honor, virtue, they are bates
That entice men's hopes to sadder fates;
Hate beauty, every ballad-monger
Can cry his idle, foppish humour;
Hate riches, wealth 's a flattering Jack—
Adores to the face, mews 'hind thy back—
He that is poor is firmly sped,

He never shall be flattered;
Love only hate; affect no higher
Than praise of Heaven, wine, a fire;
Luck of thy days in silent breath,
When that's snuffed out, come Seignor Death!"

Whether this was Marston's native humor, and that in which he lived, I do not know, but it is certainly not a very agreeable one to contemplate.

In contrast to him, is the sunny-tempered Thomas Dekker,* who was a prolific writer of dramas and of prose tracts. His plays have not much dramatic interest, although some of the characters are wonderfully life-like and vivid, and there is a serene and noble philosophy in his lines, that puts to shame the cynicism that inspires so much of Marston's pen. Here is a specimen: Born 1575? Died 1641?

"Why should we grieve at want?
Say that the world made thee her minion, that
Thy head lay in her lap, and that she danced thee
Upon her wanton knee; she could but give thee a whole world,
That 's all, and that all 's nothing. The world's greatest part
Cannot fill up one corner of thy heart;
Wert twenty kingdoms thine thou'dst live in care.
Thou could'st not sleep the better, nor live longer,
Nor happier be, nor healthfuller, nor stronger.
If then thou wantest, make that want thy pleasure;
No man wants all things, or has all in measure."

In the same spirit as this is a beautiful song, which I find in an old play, of which Dekker was joint author with two other of the dramatists, and the song was, without doubt, written by Dekker:

"Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?
O, sweet content!
Art thou rich, yet is thy mind perplexed?
O, punishment!
Dost thou laugh to see how fools are vexed—
To add to golden numbers, golden numbers?
O, sweet content,

* Dekker's name is spelled also Decker, Dekkar and Deckar.

"O, sweet, O, sweet content!
Work apace, apace, apace;
Honest Labor bears a bonny face!
Can'st drink the waters of the crystal spring?
O, sweet content!
Swim'st thou in wealth, yet sink'st in thine own tears?
O, punishment!
Then he that patiently life's burthen bears,
No burthen bears, but is a king, a king.
O, sweet, O, sweet content!"

In one of Dekker's plays there is an old man, Orlando Friscobaldo, who has always been a great favorite of mine. I think there is no character in any of these old plays whose wise and witty sayings came so near my heart as these of old Orlando. Here is a scene in which he meets Hippolito, the hero of the play:

Orlando [*entering*]. My noble Lord! the Lord Hippolito! The Duke's son! his brave daughter's brave husband! How does your honored lordship? Does your nobility remember so poor a gentleman as Signor Orlando Friscobaldo? old, mad Orlando?

Hippo. Oh, sir, our friends, they ought to be unto us as our jewels; as dearly valued being locked up and unseen, as when we wear them in our hands. I see, Friscobaldo, age hath not command of your blood; for all Time's sickle has gone over you; you are Orlando still.

Orl. Why, my Lord, are not the fields mown and cut down, and stript bare, and yet wear they not pied coats again? *Tho' my head be like the leek, white, may not my heart be like the blade, green?*

Hip. Scarce can I read the stories in your brow which age has writ there; you look youthful still.

Orl. I eat snakes, my lord, I eat snakes. *My heart shall never have a wrinkle in it* so long as I can cry Hem! with a clear voice.

Hip. You are the happier man, sir!

Orl. Happy man? I'll give you, my lord, the true picture of a happy man; I was turning leaves over this morning, and found it; an excellent Italian painter drew it; if I have it in the right colors I'll bestow it on your lordship.

Hip. I stay for it.

Orl. He for whom poor men's curses dig no grave;
He that is neither lord's nor lawyer's slave;
He that makes *this* his sea, and that his shore;
He that in 's coffin's richer than before;

He that counts youth his sword, and age his staff;
He whose right hand carves his own epitaph;
He that upon his death-bed is a swan,
And dead, no crow: he is a happy man.

Hip. Its very well; I thank you for this picture.

Orl. After this picture, my lord, do I strive to have my face drawn, for I am not covetous, am not in debt, sit neither at the duke's side, nor lie at his feet; I sowed leaves in my youth and I reap now books in my age. I fill this hand, and empty this; and when the bell shall toll for me, if I prove a swan and go singing to my rest, why so! May not old Orlando be merry now?

Hip. You may; would I were partner in your mirth.

Orl. I have a little, have all things, have nothing. I have no wife, I have no child, have no chick; and why should I not be jocundare?

Hip. Is your wife, then, departed?

Orl. She's an old dweller in those high countries, (*pointing to heaven*), yet not from me; here, she's here: (*touching his heart*), a good couple are seldom parted.

Hip. You had a daughter too, sir, had you not?

Orl. O, my lord, this old tree had one branch, and but one branch growing out of it. It was young, it was fair, it was straight; I pruned it daily, drest it carefully, kept it from the wind, helped it to the sun; yet for all my skill in planting, it grew crooked; I hewed it down; what's become of it I neither know nor care.

Hip. Then I can tell you what's become of it. The branch is withered.

Orl. So 'twas long ago.

Hip. Her name, I think, was Bellafront. She's dead.

Orl. Ha! dead?

Hip. Yes, what was left of her not worth the keeping, even in my sight, was thrown into a grave.

Orl. Dead! My last and best peace go with her! I see death's a good trencherman; he can eat coarse meat as well as the daintiest. Is she dead?

Hip. She's turned to earth.

Orl. Would she were turned to Heaven. Umph! is she dead? I am glad the world has lost one of his idols. In her grave sleep all my shame, and her own: all my sorrows and all her sins.

Hip. I'm glad you are wax, not marble; you are made
Of man's best temper, there are now good hopes
That all these heaps of ice about your heart,
By which a father's love was frozen up,
Are thaw'd in those sweet showers fetched from your eyes.

We are ne'er like angels till our passions die.
She is not dead, but lives under worse fate;
I think she's poor, and more to clip her wings,
Her husband at this hour lies in jail
For killing of a man; to save his blood
Join all your force with mine; mine shall be shown
The getting of his life preserves your own.

Orl. In my daughter, you will say: Does she live, then? I am sorry I wasted tears upon a wanton. But the best is I have a handkerchief to drink them up; soap can wash them all out again. Is she poor?

Hip. Trust me, I think she is. * * * When did you see her?

Orl. Not seventeen summers.

Hip. Is your hate so old?

Orl. Older. It has a white head, and shall never die till she be buried; her wrongs shall be my bedfellow.

Hip. Nay, but Friscobaldo—

Orl. I detest her; I defy; she's not mine, she's—

* * * *

Hip. Fare you well, for I'll trouble you no more. [*Exit Hippolito*].

Orl. [*Looking after him*]. And fare you well, sir; go thy ways; we have few lords of thy making. 'Las, my girl, art thou poor? Poverty dwells next door to despair—there's but a wall between them: despair is one of hell's catchpoles, and lest that devil arrest her, I'll to her: yet she shall not know me: she shall drink of my wealth as beggars do of running water, yet never know from what fountain-head it flows. Shall a silly bird pick her own breast to nourish her young ones, and can a father see his child starve! That were hard. The pelican does it, and shall not I?

I think I have quoted enough to show you that Dekker's "heart had no wrinkles in it," if his poetry was prompted by his disposition.

Born 1584. Died 1640. Born 1586. Died 1639?

Massinger and Ford are near the end of the list of the great poets of this era. They each wrote a number of dramas, and one of Massinger's, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, still is an acting play, partly because the principal character, Sir Giles Overreach, has so much power that the part is a favorite with actors. But I think we should be little interested to read the plays of these authors, or those of James Shirley, who ranks among the last of this line of dramatic

writers. He was born in Elizabeth's reign, and lived in that of Charles II. He wrote many plays, in one of which occurs a song which was a favorite with the merry monarch, and with this song, by which we will remember Shirley, I will close this long talk on our dramatists:

"The glories of our birth and state
  Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate—
  Death lays his icy hand on kings;
    Sceptre and crown
    Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade.

"Some men with swords may reap the field,
  And plant fresh laurels where they kill,
But their strong nerves at last must yield—
  They tame but one another still;
    Early or late
    They stoop to fate,
And must give up their murmuring breath,
When they, pale captives, creep to death.

"The garlands wither on your brow;
  Then boast no more your mighty deeds;
Upon death's purple altar now
  See where the victor-victim bleeds.
    Your hearts must come
    To the cold tomb;
Only the actions of the just
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

TALK XXVII.

On the Singers of the Golden Age of Poetry—Donne, Wotton, Wither, Herbert and Herrick.

In speaking of the dramatic poets, we have noted how many of the play-writers wrote beautiful little lyrics, which we find occurring in their plays; as the Spring song of Thomas Nash (p. 132), or the Labor song of Thomas Dekker, which we have read. If you have ever opened a volume of Shakspeare's plays, I think you could not fail to be caught by the beauty of the lyrics scattered through the book; Ariel's melodious lay in the Tempest:

> "Come unto these yellow sands,
> And then take hands,
> Court'sied when you have, and kissed
> The wild waves whist."

Or the spirited serenade from Cymbeline:

> Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
> And Phœbus 'gins arise,
> His steeds to water at the springs,
> On chaliced flowers that lies;
> And winking Mary-buds begin to ope their pretty eyes;
> With everything that pretty is, my lady, sweet, arise;
> Arise! Arise!"

Ben. Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Marston, and dramatists of lesser rank, all studded their plays with songs, some of them so musical and so fanciful that they are often like jewels shining out in a heap of rubbish, for many of these plays are only the rubbish of literature, redeemed by an occasional fine line, or by one of these beautiful lyrics.

There are also many poets not dramatic, but purely lyric,

who sang like larks in this sky. I could count you a score or two through the period covered by the reigns of Elizabeth, James and Charles I. The mention of half a score must content us, and I propose to group together in this talk the principal lyric poets from the time of Spenser to that of Milton.

John Donne comes first on my list. Early in life he was secretary to an earl, and while in this position he fell in love with the earl's niece and married her clandestinely, which so offended the lady's family, and especially her father, that he had the poet turned out from office and actually imprisoned him in the Tower. He was released, however, and won enough renown later to make his stupid old father-in-law ashamed of himself, for Donne became one of the most distinguished preachers of his time, and was made finally the Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral. His marriage turned out very happily. His wife seems to have been romantically devoted to him, and once when he was to go on a journey she formed the design of going with him in the disguise of his page, but was discovered before she could carry out her plan. She died before Donne reached the height of his success, and he grieved for her all his life after.

Born 1573. Died 1631.

Donne has been put at the head of the "metaphysical poets," who gained that title from Dr. Johnson, because, as he says, they "were men of learning, and to show their learning was their sole endeavor," so that, instead of writing poetry, they only wrote verses, and often "such verses as stood the test of the finger better than the ear." Johnson's criticism is only occasionally true of the best of these poets, though these best sometimes deserve the worst that he says of them.

For instance, in one poem Donne compares his heart to a mirror shattered into pieces by love, and goes on to prove that as the pieces of broken glass show a hundred lesser faces, "so his broken heart could feel lesser passions, but

never one great love like that his lady inspired." In another *Ode to a Flea* which has bitten both himself and his beloved, he talks about their blood being wedded in the black temple of the "insect's body!" If this is metaphysical poetry, the less we have of it the better. But Donne was not always so absurd. Here is something in a better vein—a quaint good-bye song on going away for a short absence. We will fancy he wrote it to console Mrs. Donne, when he went on the journey from which she was prevented from accompanying him as a page:

"Sweetest love, I do not go
  For weariness of thee,
Nor in hope the world can show
  A fitter home for me,
But, since that I
  Must die at last, 'tis best
Thus to use myself in jest
  By feigned death * to die.
Yesternight the sun went hence,
  And yet is here to-day.
He hath no desire nor sense,
  Nor half so short a way;
Then fear not me,
  But believe that I shall make
Hastier journeys, since I take
  More wings and spurs than he.

* * * *

Let not thy divining heart
  Forethink me any ill;
Destiny may take thy part
  And thy fears fulfill
    But think that we
Are but laid aside to sleep,
They, who one another keep
    Alive, ne'er parted be."

Near Donne in point of time is Wotton, a politician of the time of James I. For the following familiar song, alone, he deserves to be remembered:

Born 1568. Died 1639.

*That is, by absence, which is "feigned death."

"How happy is he, born or taught,
Who serveth not another's will;
Whose armour is his honest thought,
And simple truth his utmost skill.

"Whose passions not his masters are;
Whose soul is still prepared for death,
Untied unto the worldly care
Of public fame, or private breath.

* * * * * *

"Who hath his life from rumors freed;
Whose conscience is his strong retreat;
Whose state can neither flatterers feed
Nor ruin make oppressors great.

* * * * * *

"This man is freed from servile bands
Of hope to rise, or fear to fall;
Lord of himself, though not of lands,
And having nothing, yet has all."

George Wither was a most voluminous writer of prose, as well as poetry. He took the Puritan side in the political troubles, which came in the reign of Charles I, and wrote satires in verse and tracts in prose on the part of the Roundheads. His zeal got him two or three times imprisoned, and once he was in close danger of losing his life. At this time, Sir John Denham, a royalist, who was also a poet, interceded for Wither, saying that he wanted him spared, that there might be in England one poet accounted worse than he (Denham). This witty intercession of his brother poet probably saved Wither's life.

Born 1588. Died 1667.

His published works number almost one hundred. Among so much prose and verse, satires, hymns, love songs, etc., there must be much worthless stuff. Yet there are some which place Wither among the very best of the singers. I have chosen his rhymes on *Christmas* because they have such a spirited ring, and give such a vivid picture of a jovial English Christmastide:

"Lo, now is come our joyful'st feast,
Let every man be jolly;

Each room with ivy leaves is drest,
  And every part with holly.
Though some churls at our mirth repine,
Around your foreheads garlands twine,
Drown sorrow in a cup of wine,
  And let us all be merry.

"Now all our neighbors' chimneys smoke,
  And Christmas blocks are burning,
Their ovens they with baked meats choke
  And all their spits are turning.
Without the door let sorrow lie,
And if for cold it hap to die
We'll bury 't in a Christmas pie,
  And evermore be merry.

"Now every lad is wondrous trim,
  And no man minds his labour;
Our lasses have provided them
  A bagpipe and a tabor;
Young men and maids, and girls and boys,
Give life to one another's joys,
And you anon shall by their noise
  Perceive that they are merry.

"Rank misers now do sparing shun,
  Their hall of music soundeth,
And dogs thence with whole shoulders run,
  So all things there aboundeth.
The country folks themselves advance
With crowdy-muttons out of France,
And Jack shall pipe, and Gill shall dance,
  And all the town be merry.

"Ned Squash hath fetcht his bands from pawn,
  And all his best apparel;
Brisk Nell hath bought a ruff of lawn
  With droppings of the barrel.
And those that hardly all the year
Have bread to eat, or rags to wear,
Will have both clothes and dainty fare,
  And all the day be merry.

"Now poor men to the justices
  With capons make their errants,
And if they hap to fail in these

They plague them with their warrants.
But now they feed them with good cheer,
And what they want they take in beer,
For Christmas comes but once a year,
And then they shall be merry.

"The client now his suit forbears,
The prisoner's heart is eased,
The debtor drinks away his cares,
And for the time is pleased;
Though others' purses be more fat,
Why should he pine or grieve at that?
Hang sorrow! Care will kill a cat;
And therefore let's be merry.

"Hark! how the wags abroad do call
Each other forth to rambling;
Anon you'll see them in the hall
For nuts and apples scrambling.
Hark! how the roofs with laughter sound,
Anon they'll think the house goes round,
For they the cellar's depth have found,
And there they will be merry.

"Then wherefore in these merry days
Should we, I pray, be duller?
No, let us sing some roundelays
To make our mirth the fuller;
And while we, thus inspired, sing
Let all the streets with echoes ring,
Woods and hills, and everything,
Bear witness, we are merry."

Robert Herrick and George Herbert, who flourished in the reigns of James I and Charles I, were both clergymen, as well as poets, but, as clergymen and poets both, were of a very different order. Herbert was a saintly character and his poetry is nearly all devotional, breathing a spirit of real piety. He lived in a sort of hallowed retirement, always in rather delicate health, tended by a loving and beloved wife, and dying in the odor of sanctity. He was a friend of Donne, and writes in the same style of fantastic imagery, although he never wrote any verses in so light a humor as Donne. Nearly all

Herbert
Born 1593.
Died 1632.

his songs were religious. Here is a stanza or two in his characteristic vein:

"I made a posy while the day ran by;
Here will I smell the remnant out, and tie
My life within this band;
But time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And withered in my hand.

* * * *

Farewell, dear flowers, sweetly your time ye spent;
Fit, while ye lived, for smell or ornament,
And after death, for cures.
I follow straight, without complaint or grief,
Since, if my scent be good, I care not if
It be as short as yours."

The following hymn of his, with which I have no doubt you are familiar, is, I think, the best thing he ever wrote, and yet, in the last verse, in which he compares the soul to seasoned timber, you can see the fantastic sort of conceits which marred the poetry of all this style of writers, and gained them the epithet metaphysical:

"Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dews shall weep thy fall to-night,
For thou must die.

"Sweet rose, whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in the grave,
And thou must die.

"Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
Thy music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

"Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber never gives;
But tho' the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives."

Herrick, as I have intimated, was very different from Herbert. The latter wrote only pious verses. Herrick was a lively rhymester, making love songs, drinking songs, epigrams and couplets on all worldly subjects. Herbert loved quiet and retirement, and could hardly be induced to come out into the world. Herrick sought society and convivial company, and railed at the country. Yet, of the two, Robert Herrick is much the more musical poet, although he wrote much that would better never have been written. And, although he professed to hate the country, and when he had a vicarage in Devonshire frankly vented his dislike in these lines:

Born 1591. Died 1662.

"More discontent I never had,
Since I was born, than here,
Where I have been, and still am sad,
In this dull Devonshire."

Yet, as he himself says, his best verses are inspired by brooks, birds and blossoms, and no poet of the age has written so beautifully of nature as Herrick. I think this ode to *Primroses Filled with Morning Dew* is one of the most beautiful lyrics of his age, perhaps of any age of our poetry:

"Why do ye weep, sweet babes? Can tears
Speak grief in you,
Who were but born
Just as the modest morn
Teemed her refreshing dew?
Alas! you have not known that shower
That mars a flower,
Nor felt the unkind
Breath of a blasting wind,
Nor are ye worn with years,
Or warped as we,
Who think it strange to see
Such pretty flowers, like to orphans young,
Speaking by tears before ye have a tongue.

"Speak, whimpering younglings, and make known
The reason why
Ye droop and weep.

Is it for want of sleep,
Or childish lullaby?
Or that ye have not seen yet
The violet?
Or brought a kiss
From that sweetheart to this?
No, no; this sorrow shown
By your tears shed
Would have this lecture read,
That things of greatest, so of meanest worth,
Conceived with grief are, and with tears brought forth."

Herrick was driven from his parish during the wars of the Puritans and went to London, where he lived for some time very poor. Here he and Ben Jonson were great friends, and used to sup together at a tavern, where they held what Herrick calls "Lyric feasts." But London never inspired such verses as did the country sights—the daffodils, violets and may-days, of which he wrote so feelingly. After a time he went back to his vicarage and wrote more sober verses. In one of these he prays devoutly for pardon for some of his unhallowed rhymes:

"Forgive me, God, and blot each line
Out of my book that is not thine."

But, as Heaven is not likely to do for any one that which they could easily do for themselves, the lines remain unblotted to this day.

TALK XXVIII.

The Singers of the Golden Age of Poetry—Carew, Suckling, Lovelace, Waller.

Carew, Suckling and Lovelace have the air of courtiers, and were all men of the world. Thomas Carew held an office in the court of Charles I, and was a witty and accomplished gentleman, whose sonnets for ten or fifteen years before the Puritans came into power were the most popular verses of their time. They were set to music, and the ladies sang them to their harpsichords. As you can fancy, they were love-songs that Carew wrote. Indeed, have not nearly all the lyric poets of the world sung either to Love or Death? Their verses are set to a tender air or a sad one. Carew writes thus of his love when spring approaches:

Born 1589.
Died 1639.

"Now that the winter's gone, the earth hath lost
Her snow-white robes, and now no more the frost
Candies the grass, or casts an icy cream
Upon the silver lake or crystal stream;
But the warm sun thaws the benumbed earth
And makes it tender, gives a second birth
To the dead swallow, wakes in hollow tree
The drowsy cuckoo, and the humble-bee.

"Now do a choir of chirping minstrels bring
In triumph to the world, the youthful spring.
The valleys, hills and woods, in rich array,
Welcome the coming of the longed-for May;
Now all things smile, only my love doth lower,
Nor hath the scalding noon-day sun the power
To melt that marble ice, that still doth hold
Her heart congealed, and makes her pity cold. * * *

All things keep time with the season; only she doth carry
June in her eyes, in her heart January."

It will be noticed that the extravagance of poets in their love-songs increases. The fashion which Surrey and Wyatt brought in of addressing the lady of their verses as if she were more a goddess than a mortal was carried to a ridiculous pitch. Carew is one of the poets who helped to this exaggerated style. The following verses, in which he writes to his lady that she has usurped the office of the sun, and can make darkness and light at her pleasure, was a common fiction in the verse of these poets of the seventeenth century:

"If, when the sun at noon displays
His brighter rays,
Thou but appear,
He, then, all pale with shame and fear,
Quencheth his light;
Hides his dark brow, flies from thy sight,
And grows more dim,
Compared to thee, than stars to him.
If thou but show thy face again
When darkness doth at midnight reign,
The darkness flies, and light is hurled
Round about the silent world
So, as alike thou drivest away
Both light and darkness, night and day."

Sir John Suckling, a charming and graceful writer, al-
Born 1609. though he had ample gifts, seems to have prized
Died 1641. very lightly his gifts as poet. In one of his witty rhymes, called a *Session of Poets*, Apollo has assembled them all to see who shall be crowned with the wreath of laureate. Suckling describes in his sprightly style all the different aspirants for the honor, as they were noted by Apollo, till he touches himself thus:

"Suckling next was called, but did not appear,
And straight one whispered in Apollo's ear
That, of all men living, he would not do for it;
He loved not the muses so well as his sport."

Suckling's verses are true verses of society, gay, not over-earnest, and with an occasional ring of cynicism in their lines. The best and most noted of all his poems is *The Ballad on a Wedding*, in which his description of the bride will always be fresh and new. Here are a few stanzas from it:

"The bride—and thereby hangs a tale—
For such a maid no Whitsun-ale*"
Could ever yet produce.
No grape that 's kindly ripe could be
So round, so plump, so soft as she,
Nor half so full of juice.

"Her finger was so small, the ring
Would not stay on, which they did bring;
It was too wide a peck,
And, to say truth, for out it must,
It looked like the collar, just,
About our young colt's neck.

"Her feet beneath her petticoat,
Like little mice, stole in and out
As if they feared the light.
And oh! she dances such a way!
No sun upon an Easter day
Is half so fine a sight.

* * * *

"Her cheeks so fair a white was on,
No daisy makes comparison;
Who sees them is undone.
For streaks of red were mingled there
Such as are on a Catherine pear—
The side that's next the sun.

"Her lips were red, and one was thin
Compared to that was next her chin,
Some bee had stung it newly;
But Dick, her eyes so guard her face
I durst no more upon them gaze
Than on the sun in July.

"Her mouth's so small, when she doth speak
Thou'dst swear her teeth her words did break,

* A Whitsun-ale was a gathering of young men and maids on Whit-Sunday evening.

That they might passage get;
But so she handled still the matter
They came as good as ours, or better,
And are not spent a whit."

Suckling was an ardent loyalist, and when the civil war began embarked in it with all his heart and with characteristic extravagance. He equipped a company of one hundred horse in such gorgeous array that they were said to have cost him twelve thousand pounds. Then he led his dandy troops on an expedition which achieved nothing and was ridiculed by the Puritans in a witty lampoon. One of his biographers says that Sir John took all this, and the defeat of the royal party, so sorely to heart that he went to the continent, and ended his life by a dose of poison.

Richard Lovelace, with his romantic name, was another gallant poet of the court of Charles I, and loyal to the King through all misfortunes. He was a soldier in the civil war, was twice imprisoned by the Puritans, and at last set free, ruined in fortune and broken in health. The verses he wrote to Lady Lucy Sacherverell, whom he calls Lucasta in his verses, are in the noblest vein:

Born 1618.
Died 1658.

"Tell me not, dear, I'm unkind,
When from the nunnery
Of thy chaste breast and quiet mind
To wars and arms I flee.

"True, a new mistress now I chase—
The first foe in the field—
And with a stronger faith embrace
A sword, a horse, a shield.

"Yet this inconstancy is such
As you, too, should adore;
I should not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honor more."

Our heart must ache to think of the sad end of this gallant courtier who could write verses so brave and tender. There is another beautiful song, *To Althea*, written in prison, in which he says:

"Stone bars do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty."

It is said he really wrote these lines in prison, and that the lady of his love, believing he had died of his wounds received before he was imprisoned, married another, perhaps while he was writing these very verses to her; and when he was at last set free, a ruined man, he found the woman of his dreams a happy wife. He died soon after of a slow consumption, and in his last days was often seen, his handsome face, pale and wan, his once elegant person clad in ragged habiliments, going down the dirty London alley where he had his lodgings, and where at the last he died, a sad and lonely death. Poor fellow!

Edmund Waller is the last of this group of singers, as sparkling, musical and full of gaiety as the best. Born 1605. Died 1687. He also was a courtier of Charles I, but changed his colors easily, and when Cromwell was Lord Protector became his adherent, and wrote a panegyric on him after death, which is a grand tribute. But as soon as Charles II came to the throne, Waller had a poem of congratulation to offer him. When Charles, who was as shrewd as he was unprincipled and good-natured, said that his poem on Cromwell was better than the poem the poet offered him, Waller answered with ready wit, "Poets succeed better in fiction than in truth, your majesty."

The name Waller celebrated was that of a lady he called Sacharissa, a name ever since famous in verse. Generally, his verses are light as air, but there is one song which has a touch of sadness, as if written in a minor key:

"Go lovely rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me
That now she knows

When I resemble her to thee
How fair and sweet she seems to be.

"Tell her that's young,
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That had'st thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died.

"Small is the worth
Of beauty from the light retired;
Bid her come forth,
Suffer herself to be desired
And not blush so to be admired.

"Then die! that she
The common fate of all things rare
May read in thee,
How small a part of time they share
That are so wondrous sweet and fair."

Of all Waller's songs I like this best, because it sounds most in earnest; for, after all, these early song-writers do not impress us as being very much in earnest in the tributes they pay to their Julias, and Chloes and Sacharissas. Is it a charm or a defect of these dainty love-verses that they do not sound as if they came out of the depths of the heart? It may be a part of their charm that they make no large demands on our feeling. Thus, to go back to the elder poets and to read their lays, is as restful as listening to that music that asks of the listener neither thought nor tears. They make no pretense of intensity or earnestness; they are as frank as Waller, when his Sacharissa, grown an old woman, asked, "When will you ever sing such songs about me again?" and he answered, "When you are again young and beautiful." So these poets sang to youth, to beauty, the bright eye and red lip, the bloom on the peach, the unwithered rose. The soul behind all these they did not touch, except in rare verses, which are a solitary burst of music. Hence they carol like birds in sky, clear, fresh, and full of joyousness, like the lark, "that singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest."

PART IV.

THE CIVIL WAR AND RESTORATION.

MILTON TO DRYDEN.

1608 TO 1700.

INTRODUCTORY.

BEFORE going further with the history of the literature and literary men of the seventeenth century, I want to touch upon a political struggle which came to an issue in the reign of Charles I—the contests between the Puritans and the Royalists.

The Puritans, who were a small body in Elizabeth's reign, had been constantly growing stronger. They were the party of extreme Protestants, who, not satisfied that the English Church had separated from that of Rome, wanted many other reforms. They clamored for a change in manners, in politics and in the church. Their leaders believed in plain meeting-houses and simple forms of worship, and opposed the ceremonies retained in the English Church, because they reminded them of the Church of Rome, which was so odious to them. In politics, their ideas were as revolutionary as their ideas in religion. The greater part of them belonged to the people of the middle class, who had done more than any other for the prosperity of England, but had not shared the privileges of the nobles, and began to feel they were shut out from many rights which they ought to claim. There was among them a strong spirit of revolt and many republican ideas. In the time of James I, a good deal had been said about the "divine right of kings" in the court circles and among the nobility, which was especially hateful to the Puritans, who

believed only in the divine right of the Deity, and that this right was not bestowed on either Pope or kings. True, not all the nobles held these extreme ideas of monarchy. Walter Raleigh opposed them, and in some of his latest letters, written to the young Prince Henry, the eldest son of James I, while he was in the Tower, he urged him not to accept the extreme ideas of a monarch's power over his people. "Preserve to your future subjects," Raleigh writes in one of these letters, "the *divine right* of being free agents, and to your own royal house the divine right of being their benefactors." But King and court were not so wise as Raleigh, and, unfortunately, the young Prince Henry, who listened to and admired his counsels, died, and left the throne to his narrow-minded brother, Charles I. If he had lived, we should probably have had a different chapter in English history, in which Oliver Cromwell would have been left out.

In manners and modes of living, also, the Puritans favored a reform. They were inclined to wear clothes of plain cut and sober colors; they cropped their hair and shaved their faces, and so got the name of *Roundheads* from their opponents. Their speech was serious and full of Bible quotations, and it was claimed that their constant psalm-singing had given their voices a nasal twang. They took up for their guidance many of the laws of the Hebrews under Moses, and gave their children Hebrew names, taken from the Old Testament. They were austere in conduct, discouraged games and amusements, and were especially hostile to the theater. You can imagine, without my telling you, what an influence all these ideas would have on literature.

The Royalists, who were also called *Cavaliers*, were in broadest contrast to the Puritans. The Cavalier loved mirth and revelry. He kept merry Christmas each year, and went to see a play when in London. He wore bright-colored silks and velvets, and his hair and beard were long

and flowing. He had not been so long weaned from the Church of Rome that he could feel as if he were in church when he sat on a bench inside the four bare walls of a Puritan "meeting" house, and heard a preacher without a robe. He wanted cathedral and altar, fine singing in his choir, and the all-imposing ceremonies of worship. Above all, like every true-born Englishman, he loved his sovereign, whether he or she happened at the time to be English, like Elizabeth, or Scotch, like James I, or German, as a century later was George of Brunswick.

The Puritans, as well as the Cavaliers, were loyal Englishmen, and if Charles I had been a wise, far-seeing ruler, he might have guided his kingdom through the storm without shipwreck. Instead of this, he was bigoted, narrow-minded, and blind to the best interests of his people. He had an absurd idea of the divine right of a king, and by his persistance in unjust authority he lost his cause, when a little yielding would have gained it. At length he so alienated this Puritan party that they broke out in open rebellion. Their leader was Oliver Cromwell, a man of great power, ambition and military ability. Under his leadership, the Puritans were so successful that they carried everything before them, and, seizing the King, they tried him for treason against the liberties of the people, beheaded him, and took the government into their own hands. 1649.

From the time the rebellion began, until his death in 1658, Oliver Cromwell was really the ruler of England. He was not called so, however, till five years before his death, when he received the title of Lord Protector. He ruled England severely, like the autocrat he was, but with ability and wisdom. When he died an attempt was made to create his son Richard Lord Protector after him; but by this time the English people, who loved the royal line in spite of its faults, would have no more of Cromwellian rule. They had yearned after the son of their dead king, who had been since youth exiled

from his country, and bringing home this hereditary princ they made him King Charles II. This restoring of th prince to his father's throne is a notable point i English history, and is known as the *Restoration.*

1660.

Never did any English sovereign have a nobler opportu nity to make himself immortal in history and blessed in th memories of his people, than Charles II. He was welcome to the throne with such joy as the cool-blooded Englis rarely show. If there had been in him one spark o kingliness, one spark of true manliness, he might hav been a great monarch. He could easily, by his influ ence, have ennobled politics; have made manners pur without making them too severe; have elevated literature and kept religion on a high level, free from the gloom and hardness of Puritanism on the one side, and the empt hollowness of forms on the other. All this Charles, b his own example, if he had been a noble gentleman might have done. But he was an unprincipled, dis honorable man. He brought with him a crowd of courtiers many of whom had been in France, and who had brough back all the vices they found there to graft them on those of England. Literature, especially the drama, reflected al these vices. Never was the stage so degraded as in the reign of Charles. Women went in masks to the theater ashamed to show their faces there; and men of rare wit an great brilliancy devoted all their talents to the production of poetry so full of coarseness that it is now, happily, almost unread and unknown.

As would be natural, nearly all the literary men and po ets, from the beginning of the civil war struggle, were on the side of the King, and many of them shed their blood for his sake. From the earliest times that the minstrel first sounded his harp in the banquet halls of his chief, the poet had generally been under the King's patronage. Most of the singers of whom I have already spoken were royalists— Lovelace, Suckling, Herrick and the rest. Waller was a

turncoat, and could write odes either for Cromwell or Charles II, as occasion offered; and Wither is almost the only man among them who was a Puritan and suffered in the cause. There was, however, one poet, so great that he over-topped all others, and made amends for the loss of all the rest, whose heart and brain were enlisted in the Puritan cause. This was JOHN MILTON, the great English epic poet—the great poet immediately following Shakspeare—and it is of him that I begin my account of the writers of this period.

TALK XXIX.

On John Milton.

Eight years before the death of Shakspeare, John Milton was born. His father's house was in Bread Street, London, where the clanging of Bow Bells must have been one of the first sounds in his baby ears. Close by, in the same street, was the Mermaid tavern, and when a toddling child, Milton may have seen the figures of Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Ben Jonson, or any of the notable members of that club at the Mermaid, as they passed the door of his father's house on their way to the famous old inn.

Born 1608.
Died 1674.

Milton stands alone in my imagination, a grand and solitary figure in English literature. We do not see him as we see Shakspeare, surrounded by a group of poets of his own kind, even though far below him in genius; or, like Shakspeare again, followed by a host of imitators. He stands apart—dignified, sublime,—the great epic poet of our language.

Somebody says, in a description of Milton's father, that he "was a good musician and a bad poet." That the elder Milton had an excellent talent for music is proved by some of his compositions which still remain, and he loved the art so much that his son was trained in the knowledge of it from babyhood. Perhaps this early culture attuned Milton's ear to catch that grand movement and harmony which is the charm and power of his poetry.

He was a precocious boy, delicate and scholarly, and so beautiful, with his fair skin, curling light hair and brown eyes, that his fellow students nick-named him the "*lady*"

in college. He wrote verses at seventeen, studied till midnight when a mere child, and in college says of himself: "There for seven years I studied the learning and arts wont to be taught, far from all vice and approved by all good men." At twenty-four he left college, and spent four or five years in writing and study. During this time, he wrote his two plays—*Comus* and *Arcades*—his lyrics—*L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, and the *Lament for Lycidas*, and some sonnets. After this he went to France and Italy. Here he spent a happy season, going to literary parties in Rome, where he met the poets and scholars of the time, and making some life-long friends in these journeyings. But the strife between the court and the Puritans had broken out fiercely. England had begun to be in a turmoil, and Milton was too anxious about his country to stay away in content; so he returned, and, taking a house in St. Bride's Churchyard, began as a school-master, teaching his two nephews and some other pupils their Greek, Latin and mathematics—writing meanwhile vigorous tracts in favor of the revolutionary sentiments, every day growing stronger. No more verse like *L'Allegro*, no masques like *Comus*, were again to come from his pen.

When Cromwell became Lord Protector of England, Milton was made his Latin secretary, and was in close commerce with the heads of the Puritan party, writing in favor of political liberty, and the liberty of the press. During this time he undertook an answer to the theory of the divine right of kings, which, since Charles I was beheaded, had been strongly proclaimed in Europe. His physicians, who saw symptoms of coming blindness, begged him not to begin this work, but he would not be moved from what he thought was duty, and continued until he became totally blind.

After Cromwell's death, and Charles II had been restored to the throne of his father, Milton, whose head was for a time in danger, settled down in the leisure of old age and blindness, with the design of writing a great poem, a design

which no doubt had been in his thoughts while affairs of state had held him busy. For twenty years he had written no poetry. Now he resolved that he would take something worthy of him: an heroic subject with heroic treatment. He would write no more light verses as in his earlier poems; no rhymes, which he now called "the jingling sounds of like endings," "the invention of a barbarous age to set off wretched matter and lame metre."

At first he thought of taking the British King Arthur for the hero of his work, but finally chose a subject more supernatural, the revolt of Satan in Heaven, and the expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise, which, in an earlier age, had been the theme of Cædmon's untaught pen. *Paradise Regained* followed *Paradise Lost*, and these epics, with the tragedy of *Samson Agonistes*, whose hero was the mighty Hebrew, smitten with blindness, were the work of Milton's latest days.

You will notice that Milton's writings are in three distinct groups. His early poems, when he wrote in the lyric style; his prose works, written in the middle period of his life, and his later days, when he wrote in the epic style, and only in blank verse.

I fancy that Milton, in his later days, when he wrote *Paradise Lost*, did not have a great admiration for his early poems. Yet they are so musical and so graceful that I am very glad he did not hold his severe opinions about rhyme when, in early manhood, he wrote these fanciful verses, with their "jingling sound of like endings."

The lightest of all his pieces are *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, two odes to mirth and to melancholy. The first begins with this gay invocation:

"Haste thee, Nymph, and bring with thee
Jest and youthful Jolity,
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang on Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;

Sport, that wrinkled care derides,
And Laughter, holding both his sides,
Come, and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastic toe;
And in thy right hand lead with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet Liberty.
And if I give thee honour due
Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreproved pleasure free."

Then the poet goes on to paint the delights of a day in the country, when at early morn he is waked by the lark, who—

"Singing, startles the dull night
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow,
Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,
Or the twisted eglantine;
While the cock, with lively din,
Scatters the rear of darkness thin,
And to the stack, or the barn door,
Stoutly struts his dames before.
Oft listening how the hounds and horn
Cheerly rouse the slumbering morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Through the highwood echoing shrill,
Sometime walking not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light,
The clouds in thousand liveries dight,
While the plowman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrowed land,
And the milk-maid singeth blythe
And the mower whets his scythe,
And every shepherd tells his tale,
Under the hawthorn in the dale.
Straight mine eye hath caught new pleasures,
While the landscape round, it measures

Russet lawns and fallows gray,
Where the nibbling flocks do stray,
Mountains, on whose barren breast
The laboring clouds do often rest;
Meadows trim, with daisies pied,
Shallow brooks, and rivers wide;
Towers and battlements it sees,
Bosomed high in tufted trees,
Where, perhaps, some beauty lies,
The cynosure of neigboring eyes.

* * *

Sometimes, with secure delight,
The upland hamlets will invite,
When the merry bells ring round
And the jocund rebus sound
To many a youth and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequered shade,
And young and old come forth to play
On a sunshine holiday,
Till the livelong daylight fail."

So the day passes in innocent sport till sunset, when the country folk gather to take their spicy, nut-brown ale, and tell stories of fairies, and of the good little house-goblins who do the housework when the maids are asleep, contented if a bowl of cream be set out for them to drink when work is over. Their stories done, the country people creep to bed, while the poet goes towards the city and its pleasures:

"To the busy hum of men,
Where throngs of knights and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold,
With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, when all commend.
There let Hyman oft appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With mask and antique pageantry,
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer eves by haunted stream.

Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Johnson's learned sock be on,
Or Sweetest Shakspeare, Fancy's child,
Warbles his native wood-notes wild."

Thus the day of pleasure ends in a gush of soft music, when the poet sinks to rest, lapped in Lydian airs:

"Married to immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out,
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.

* * * *

These delights, if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live."

The companion to *L'Allegro* was *Il Penseroso*, or Melancholy, in which he sings the praise of sadness as he has sung that of mirth. But Milton's melancholy, like his mirth, is temperate and not passionate. He addresses a

"Goddess, sage and holy.
Hail! divinest Melancholy,
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight,
And therefore, to our weaker view,
O'erlaid with black, staid Wisdom's hue,

* * * * *

Come pensive nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure,
All in a robe of darkest grain,
Flowing with majestic train,
And sable stole of Cyprus lawn
Over thy decent shoulders drawn.
Come, but keep thy wonted state,
With even step, and musing gait,
And looks commercing with the skies;
Thy rapt soul sitting in thine eyes,
There, held in holy passion still,

Forget thyself to marble, till
With a sad, leaden downward cast
Thou fix them on the earth as fast."

In contrast to mirth, whose course was begun in the joyous day by the singing of the lark, Penseroso is of the evening, and her bird is the sad nightingale, who sings in dusky twilight. The poet paints himself wandering over the smooth-shaven green, watching the moon, half hid by fleecy clouds; or later, going to his study,

"Where glowing embers through the room,
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom;"

till finally, in his lonely tower, he lights his midnight lamp and watches out the night with his books. Plato, Homer, the great tragic poets, and our own Chaucer, all speak to him from their pages in "Sage and solemn tunes, where more is meant than meets the ear," till morning dawns again.

"Thus Night, oft see me in thy pale career,
Till civil suited Morn appear,
Not tricked and frounced as she was wont
With the Attic boy to hunt,
But kerchiefed in a comely cloud
While rocking winds are piping loud,
Or ushered with a shower still,
When the gust has blown his fill,
Ending on the rustling leaves
With minute drops from off the eaves.
And when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves,
Of pine or monumental oak,
Where the rude axe, with heaved stroke,
Was never heard the Nymphs to daunt,
Or fright them from their hallowed haunt.
There, in close covert by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,
Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee with honied thigh,
That at her flowery work doth sing,

And the waters murmuring,
With such concert as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep,
And let some strange, mysterious dream,
Wave his wings in airy stream,
Of lively portraiture displayed
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
About, above, or underneath,
Sent by some spirits to mortals good
Or th' unseen genius of the wood.

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the hight embowe'd roof,
With antique pillars, mossy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light,
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness thro' mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstacies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes,
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage—
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that Heaven doth show,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live."

TALK XXX.

Milton's Comus, Paradise Lost, and Samson Agonistes.

I have before told you something about the *masques*, a kind of dramatic entertainment fashionable all through the reign of Elizabeth to the time of Charles I. These masques were performed in the court, or in the palaces of the nobility, and were often a part of the Christmas entertainment in the houses of the wealthy people. At that time no women ever performed in the plays in any public theater, but in these masques, or private entertainments, the ladies, as well as the gentlemen, took part. It was, therefore, quite the fashion to write a masque, and the best writers of the time were proud to try their hand at it. Lord Bacon wrote several, in the time of Elizabeth and James I., and all the great dramatic poets, except Shakspeare, have one or more among their works. We shall not be surprised, therefore, to learn that Milton wrote two masques—the *Comus* and *Arcades*. The last of these, which is only a fragment, was played before the Countess of Derby, at Hatfield, by some of her family, and *Comus* was given at Ludlow Castle, the estate of the Earl of Bridgewater. The chief characters in Comus, a young maiden and her brothers, were played by the Lady Alice Egerton, daughter of the Earl, and his sons, Lord Brackly and Sir Thomas Egerton. The story is of a lady, who, in coming through the forest, is separated from her two brothers, her companions. The wood is haunted by Comus, a spirit of unwholesome mirth, who, with a crew of monsters in the forms of men with the heads of beasts, is holding

wild revels there. Comus, disguised as a shepherd, under pretense of leading the lady to her brothers, beguiles her to his palace, where he tries to bring her under his enchantments; but as she is too pure and good to be harmed by his spells, he leaves her, after succeeding in fixing her to a chair in the banquet room, which holds her fast so that she cannot move from it. Here she is found by her brothers, led by her guardian spirit, and with the aid of the river nymph, Sabrina, she is rescued and brought to her father's castle.

This is the plot of *Comus*, which Milton is said to have founded on the fact that the Lady Alice had recently missed her way in some woodland excursion, and thus caused some alarm to her friends. It is a very simple plot, but Milton has woven on it a most exquisite play. It is too perfect a whole to quote in passages, and must be read entire, but no one who wishes to know Milton as a poet in youth should fail to read the *Comus*.

It is as a poet that we consider Milton, and so we must pass by his prose works, many of which were written in Latin; but, in passing, I must tell you that his plea for the liberty of the press (a prose tract which bears the hard title of *Areopagitica*), is the one of all his prose works best worth your reading. Milton's pen and influence were generally used for freedom—freedom of speech, freedom of thought, freedom of belief—and although there are occasions on which he was not so generous as we, who live in the present, might wish he had been, yet he was so far ahead of his time in his thought, that we must admire him as a grand mouth-piece of Liberty.

There is something that touches the heart in the picture we have of him in the last of life, when he sat down, blind and poor, to write Paradise Lost. I am sorry that very few people now-a-days read Paradise Lost, and I fear as time goes on that it will be even less read. Unfortunately, the poem in its subject and its characters does not come within the scope of human interests, and the greatest poet in the

world would find it difficult to keep his readers from yawning if he did not write about things that excite the sympathy or touch the emotions. It is next to impossible to feel a lively interest in the disputes of fiends in hell, or in the fortunes of a pair of human beings so remote as Adam and Eve. Notwithstanding the grand style and organ-like melody of Paradise Lost, it can hold the attention of few readers, and a great many who attempt to read it, put it away as tiresome. Yet any one who has an ear for a grand poetic measure, so superb in harmony that it has never been equalled in English verse from Chaucer to this day, must be charmed by Milton's mighty line. It seems to me that the poet's early musical training shows in his style. It is after the manner of a grand instrument; your ear would be held captive if you did not heed the sense, and from beginning to end, wherever his theme leads him, he preserves the same unbroken harmony.

That Milton was able to touch the heart of his reader, and that, if he had chosen a subject within the sphere of natural, human sympathy, he could have held the interest, is proved by the fact that, when he claims our sympathy, he does it with great power. We shall feel this in Book Third of *Paradise Lost*, which begins by an all-hail to Light, "Offspring of Heaven, first born," where he goes on with touching sadness:

"but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled. Yet not the more
Cease I to wander, where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,
That wash thy hallowed feet and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit. * * *
Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers; as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling and in shadiest covert hid,

Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, or the sweet approach of even and morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine;
But cloud instead, and ever during dark
Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
Cut off, and for the book of knowledge fair
Presented with a universal blank
Of nature's works, to me expunged and razed,
And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mists from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight."

In his tragedy of *Samson*, Milton also touches on the same subject in a strain of patient and majestic sorrow. It seems as if the figure of the blind Samson was akin to Milton, and that he chose him for his hero because he felt the resemblance. Thus Samson soliloquizes as he sits in Gaza:

"But, peace, I must not quarrel with the will
Of highest dispensation, which herein
Haply had ends above my reach to know;
Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
And proves the source of all my miseries,
So many and so huge, that each apart
Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!
Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
Dungeon or beggary, or decrepit age!
Light, the prime work of God, to me is extinct,
And all her various objects of delight
Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased.
Inferior to the vilest now become
Of man or worm; the vilest here excel me;
They creep, yet see; I, dark, in light exposed
To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
Within doors, or without, still as a fool
In power of others, never in my own;

Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half,
O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all,
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in the vacant interlunar cave,
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confined,
So obvious, and so easy to be quenched,
And not as feeling through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light.
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable,
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From most of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But hereby made obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life—
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes."

Milton's later poetry must be read in grand passages like these, to be appreciated. There are few young readers who will read *Paradise Lost* entire, and they will be likely to enjoy his youthful poems most. Indeed, we are not apt to be pleased with epic poetry in youth. The incidents of the dramatic poem, or the music of the lyric, then please us best, and it is not until life is mature that we can see fully the greatness of Homer and Milton, and set them in their place among the poets of the world.

But if we did not care for Milton's poetry, we should

admire him as a man. He wrote his great poems in an age when literature reflected the license that followed in natural reaction from the severe rule of the Puritans. Never was literature so degraded as in that age, when the reigning poets, from the laureate down, put common decency to the blush, cried out upon everything sacred, and believed neither in honor nor virtue among men or women. Amid all these Milton shone like a star, living the life of an ascetic, and, by the practice of a noble temperance, preparing himself to sing his grand epic. Thus he stands apart from and above his contemporaries, a noble, self-centered man, who, in an age of license, sang only to the highest ideals and in praise of the loftiest virtue.

> "Love virtue. She alone is free.
> She can teach you how to climb
> Higher than the sphery chime;
> Or if virtue feeble were,
> Heaven itself would stoop to her."

TALK XXXI.

On Milton's Contemporaries: Marvell, Cowley and Butler.

Milton was the great poet of his century; there is no other man of the time worthy to rank beside him, either among Puritans or Cavaliers. His place in literature is all the more distinctive, because he was a Puritan, and nearly all the other poets of the time were royalists, devoted to the king's cause. There is one other writer who was in sympathy with Milton, who deserves to be mentioned near him. This is Andrew Marvell, who, although a Puritan, was a moderate man, who knew how to find the middle path, in which tolerance and common sense usually walk together.

Marvell lived in Lincolnshire, a county which was famous for Puritans, and sent so many emigrants to America in the early settlement of New England. After Charles II was restored to the throne, Marvell was sent to represent his native town in parliament, and held the seat in firm opposition to the vices of the rulers. He was a man so wise and witty that the king could not help admiring him, and once sent his lord of the treasury to see if he could not be won over to the royal side. Marvell received his guest hospitably, but gave him mutton for dinner on three successive days. And when the courtier at last offered him place and money to change his politics, the staunch old roundhead told him plainly, that since he could dine contentedly every day on a shoulder of mutton, the king could offer him no inducement to change his colors.

Born 1620.
Died 1678.

Marvell's writings are principally political satires, witty in his time, but not interesting now. He has, however, a few poems that from their sentiment have been able to outlive his age, and I select one of the shortest. It is on *Eyes and Tears*, and is, as you will notice, in the style of the metaphysical poets, with its talk about "watery lines and plummets," and the sun "distilling the world with chemic ray." In spite of this, there are some pretty thoughts in the verses, and the last dozen lines I think are very beautiful.

EYES AND TEARS.

"How wisely Nature did decree
With the same eyes to weep and see,
That, having viewed the object vain,
They might be ready to complain!
And since the self-deluding sight,
In a false angle takes each height,
These tears, which better measure all,
Like watery lines and plummets fall.
Two tears, which sorrow long did weigh
Within the scales of either eye,
And then paid out in equal poise,
Are the true price of all my joys.
What in the world most fair appears,

Yea, even laughter turns to tears,
And all the jewels that we prize
Melt in these pendants of the eyes.
I have through every garden been
Amongst the red, the white, the green,
And yet from all those flowers I saw
No honey, but these tears could draw.
So the all-seeing sun each day
Distils the world with chemic ray,
But finds the essence only showers,
Which straight in pity back he pours.
Yet happy they whom grief doth bless,
That weep the more and see the less,
And to preserve their sight more true
Bathe still their eyes in their own dew.
So Magdalen in tears more wise
Dissolves those captivating eyes
Whose liquid chains could flowing meet
To fetter her Redeemer's feet.

* * * * *

The incense is to Heaven dear
Not as a perfume, but a tear.
And stars show lovely in the night,
But as they seem the tears of light,
Ope, then, my eyes your double sluice,
And practice so your noblest use,
For others, too, can see, or sleep,
But only human eyes can weep."

Another noted poet of this age is Abraham Cowley, a trusted servant and secretary of Charles I, and afterwards devoted to his son, Charles II, who seems to have neglected the poet during his life, and to have contented himself with saying of him after his death, "Mr. Cowley has not left behind him a better man in England."

Born 1618. Died 1667.

Milton prized Cowley highly, and thought him one of the greatest among poets; but he is not so much valued now. Much better than his verses I like his prose essays, of which he wrote a dozen or more. The theme of nearly all his essays is a praise of country life—a life without ambition of

cares, led among green fields and still waters. The titles of the essays indicate this. They are on *Solitude*, *Gardens*, *Agriculture*, *Liberty*, and kindred subjects. It seemed as if in all he wrote, Cowley felt the tediousness and hollowness of a life at court, and longed to be free from it. In his essay on Agriculture he praises above all lives that of the farmer, and in his essay on Greatness he praises a simple house and simple fare above all the luxury of court. His essay on Liberty contains as grand a definition of Freedom as has ever been given. He says, "The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made themselves, under whatsoever form it be of government. The liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and his country."

In the last of his life Cowley did attain to a little estate in the country about which he had written so much and had so longed for. He did not live very long to enjoy it, and had suffered so many disappointments before getting it, that he was not altogether happy in the realization of his wishes. After a few years of retreat, he died suddenly of cold caught from getting overheated with working in the harvest among his laborers.

Cowley was a versatile writer both in prose and verse. In poetry he has one long epic of which the Hebrew King, David, is the hero. He also wrote several plays; but of all his poetry I like much best his shorter pieces. He was very familiar with the Greek and Latin poets, and put many of their verses into so free a translation that they have the merit of an original. His *Songs from Anacreon* are specimens of this easy and free rendering.

Cowley began to write very early, and tells us in one of his essays, titled "Myself," that he wrote verses at thirteen. He says here: "How this love of poetry came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance which filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing

there; for I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlor (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, monsters and giants, and brave houses which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had very little to do with all this), and by degrees, with the tinkling of the rhymes and the dance of the numbers, I had read him all over before I was twelve years old, and was thus made a poet almost immediately."

I think I cannot give you a more characteristic specimen of Cowley, as showing the bent of his mind as well as his easy style, than by quoting a story which he borrowed from one of the Latin authors, and which is added to one of his essays in praise of a country life. It is *The Country Mouse:*

"At the large foot of a fair hollow tree,
Close to ploughed ground, seated commodiously,
His ancient and hereditary house,
There dwelt a good, substantial country mouse;
Frugal, and grave, and careful of the main,
Yet one who once did nobly entertain
A city mouse, well-coated, sleek, and gay,
A mouse of high degree, who lost his way,
Wantonly walking forth to take the air,
And arrived early and alighted there
For a day's lodging; the good, hearty host
(The ancient plenty of his hall to boast),
Did all the stores produce that might excite,
With various tastes, the courtier's appetite—
Fitches and beans, peason, and oats, and wheat,
And a large chestnut, the delicious meat
Which Jove himself—were he a mouse—would eat;
And for a *hautgout** there was mixed with these
A rind of bacon, and the coat of cheese,
The precious relics which at harvest, he

*Richness—pronounced ho-goo.

Had gathered from the reaper's luxury.
'Freely,' said he, 'fall on, and never spare;
The bounteous gods will for to-morrow care.'
And, thus at ease, on beds of straw they lay,
And to their genius sacrificed the day;
Yet the nice guest's epicurean mind
(Tho' breeding made him civil seem, and kind),
Despised this country feast, and still his thought
Upon the pies and cakes of London wrought.
'Your bounty and civility,' said he,
'Which I'm surprised in these rude parts to see,
Shows that the gods have given you a mind
Too noble for the fate that here you find.
Why should a soul so virtuous, and so great
Lose itself thus in an obscure retreat?
Let savage beasts lodge in a country den.
You should see towns, and manners know, and men,
And taste the generous luxury of the court,
Where all the mice of quality resort.
We all, ere long, must render up our breath
No cave nor hole can shelter us from death
Since life is so uncertain and so short,
Let's spend it all in feasting and in sport.
Come, worthy sir, come with me, and partake
All the great things that mortals happy make.'
Alas! what virtues hath sufficient 'larms
T' oppose bright honour and soft pleasure's charms!
What wisdom can their magic force repel?
It draws this reverend hermit from his cell.

"Plainly, the truth to tell, the sun was set
When to the town the weary travelers get,
To a lord's house, as lordly as can be,
Made for the use of pride and luxury.
They come; the gentle courtier at the door
Stops, and will hardly enter in before.
'But 'tis, sir, your command, and, being so,
I'm sworn obedience,' and so in they go.
Behind a hanging in a spacious room
(The richest work of Mortlake's no[illegible]om),
They wait awhile, their wearied lin[illegible]s to rest,
Till silence should invite them to their feast.
About the hour that Cynthia's silver light

Has reached the pale meridian of the night,
At last, the various supper being done,
It happened that the company was gone
Into a room remote, servants and all,
To please their noble fancies with a ball.
Our host leads forth the stranger, and does find
All fitted to the bounties of his mind.
Still on the table half-filled dishes stood,
And with delicious bits the floor was strewed.
The courteous mouse presents him with the best,
And both with fat varieties were blest.
The industrious peasant everywhere doth range,
And thanks the gods for his life's happy change.
Lo! in the midst of a well freighted pie
They both at last glutted and wanton lie,
When—see the sad reverse of prosperous fate,
And what fierce storms on mortal glories wait—
With hideous noise, down the rude servants come,
Six dogs before ran barking into th' room.
The wretched gluttons fly with wild affright,
And hate the fulness which retards their flight;
Our trembling peasant wishes now in vain
That rocks and mountains covered him again.
O how the change of his poor life he curst!
'This, of all lives,' said he, 'is sure the worst.
Give me again, ye gods, my cave and wood;
With peace, let tares and acorns be my food.'"

One more little bit from Cowley, in a different vein, and we must leave him. This is the ode to a *Grasshopper:*

"Happy insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine
The dewy morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still
And thy verdant cup doth fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread
Nature's self thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance and sing
Happier than the happiest king,
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee;
All that summer hours produce,

Fertile made with early juice.
Man doth for thee sow and plough;
Farmer he, and landlord thou.
Thou dost innocently enjoy;
Nor does thy luxury destroy.
The shepherd gladly heareth thee
More harmonious than he.
To thee, of all things upon earth
Life is no longer than thy mirth.
Happy insect, happy thou,
Dost neither age nor winter know,
But when thou'st drunk and danced and sung
Thy fill the flowery leaves among
(Voluptuous and wise withal,
Epicurean animal,)
Satiated with thy feast
Thou retir'st to endless rest."

Born 1612. Died 1680.

Of all the supporters of the Royalist cause at this time, none did it better service than Samuel Butler. He turned the Puritans into ridicule in his poem of *Hudibras*, one of the wittiest satires ever written, and you know that no weapon is more powerful against a foe than ridicule. There were plenty of absurdities in the Puritan manners and dress for ridicule to lay hold of, and for all these Butler had a quick eye. He took for his hero Sir Hudibras, a Presbyterian knight, who, with his squire, Ralph, goes out to redress all wrongs, and correct all abuses in law or religion. If you have read the account of Don Quixote setting out with his squire, Sancho Panza, on his travels, you will be reminded of it by Hudibras, but the stories are not much alike, except in the beginning, though Hudibras, like the Don, gets into all sorts of scrapes. He gets beaten, is set in stocks, pelted with rotten eggs and all sorts of unpleasant missiles, and is, from first to last, a ridiculous object, although he preserves a serene self-conceit, and is unconscious that anybody is laughing at him. You can imagine how much the cavaliers must have enjoyed this picture of their enemy, the Puritan.

Hudibras is a pattern of clever rhyming, and few poets

before or since, can approach Butler in making difficult words fall easily into rhyme and meter, as thus:

> "Whatever sceptic could inquire for,
> For every why he had a wherefore.'

Or this:

> "Alas, what perils do environ
> The man who meddles with cold iron."

The poem also abounds in lines that have been so much quoted that we use them almost without knowing where we get them.

I shall not attempt to quote from *Hudibras*, because it is difficult to give extracts from it, but I will quote a short satire from Butler which is a capital illustration of his merit.

THE ELEPHANT IN THE MOON.

> "A learned society of late,
> The glory of a foreign state,
> Agreed, upon a summer's night,
> To search the moon by her own light;
> To take an inventory of all
> Her real estate and personal;
> And make an accurate survey
> Of all her lands, and how they lay;
> To observe her country how 'twas planted,
> With what abounded most, or wanted,
> And make the properest observations,
> For settling of new plantations,
> If the society should incline
> To attempt so glorious a design;
> This was the purpose of their meeting,
> For which they chose a time as fitting,
> When, at the full her radiant light,
> And influence, too, were at their height,
> And now the lofty tube, the scale
> With which they heaven itself assail,
> Was mounted full against the moon,
> And all stood ready to fall on,
> Impatient, who should have the honour
> To plant an ensign first upon her;
>
> "When one, who, for his deep belief

Was virtuoso then, in chief,
Approved the most profound and wise,
To solve impossibilities,
Advancing gravely, to apply
To th' spy-glass his judging eye,
Cried, 'Strange!' then reinforced his sight
Against the moon with all his might,
And bent his penetrating brow,
As if he meant to gaze her through;
When all the rest began to admire,
And like a train from him took fire,
Surprised with wonder, beforehand,
At what they did not understand,
Cried out impatient to know what
The matter was, they wondered at;

"Quoth he, 'The inhabitants of the moon,
Who, when the sun shines hot at noon,
Do live in cellars underground,
Of eight miles deep, and eighty round,
Which they call towns and cities there,
Because their people's civiller
Than the rude peasants, that are found
To live upon the upper ground,
Called Privolans, with whom they are
Perpetually in open war;
And now both armies, highly enraged,
Are in a bloody fight engaged;
Look quickly, then, that every one
May see the fight before 'tis done.'"

On this, one philosopher after the other applies his eye to the telescope to see the fight in the moon. They all make some discovery concerning the contending armies and their positions, till at length one of the wisest, after he has looked long and attentively through the glass, cries out:

"A stranger sight appears
Than e'er was seen in all the spheres,
A wonder more unparalleled
Than ever mortal tribe beheld:
An ELEPHANT from one of those
Two mighty armies is broke loose,
And with the horror of the fight,

And the waters murmuring,
With such concert as they keep,
Entice the dewy-feathered sleep,
And let some strange, mysterious dream,
Wave his wings in airy stream,
Of lively portraiture displayed
Softly on my eyelids laid.
And as I wake, sweet music breathe
About, above, or underneath,
Sent by some spirits to mortals good
Or th' unseen genius of the wood.

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And love the hight embowe'd roof,
With antique pillars, mossy proof,
And storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim, religious light,
There let the pealing organ blow,
To the full-voiced choir below,
In service high and anthems clear,
As may with sweetness thro' mine ear,
Dissolve me into ecstacies,
And bring all Heaven before mine eyes,
And may at last my weary age
Find out the peaceful hermitage—
The hairy gown and mossy cell,
Where I may sit and rightly spell
Of every star that Heaven doth show,
And every herb that sips the dew,
Till old experience do attain
To something like prophetic strain.
These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will choose to live."

This being overheard by one
Who was not so far overgrown
In any virtuous speculation,
To judge with mere imagination,
Immediately he made a guess
At solving all appearances,
And found, upon a second view,
His own hypothesis most true;
For he had scarce applied his eye
To the engine, but immediately
He found *a mouse* was gotten in
The hollow tube, and shut between
The two glass windows, in restraint
Was swelled into an elephant,
And proved the virtuous occasion
Of all their learned dissertation."

Meanwhile the wise members of the society had penned their learned statement, and it was already sealed and signed, when the elephant was discovered to be a mouse. A great hubbub of dispute arose, the larger part of the body refusing to believe that they had been deceived till after a long discussion, some one suggested that the instrument be taken apart and examined.

"And when they had unscrewed the glass
To find out where the imposter was,
And saw the mouse that by mishap
Had made the telescope a trap,
Annoyed, confounded and afflicted
To be so openly convicted,
Immediately they get them gone
With this discovery alone—
That those who greedily pursue
Things wonderful instead of true,
That in the speculation choose,
To make discoveries strange news,
Hold no truth worthy to be known
That is not huge and overgrown,
And explain all appearances,
Not as they are, but as they please—
In vain strive Nature to suborn,
And for their pains are paid with scorn."

TALK XXXII.

The Diaries of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.

It is one of the weaknesses of human nature to relish gossip: to be interested in details about one's neighbors; to want to know what they have been doing, what sort of clothes they wear, and what they had for dinner on a feast day. The student in history and literature finds just this kind of relish, in gossip about people of the past. He likes to know all the little facts about them, as what they wore, and what they ate for dinner, and thus it is quite natural that two old books full of gossip and small talk about the time of Charles the II have come to be two of the best read books written in that age. These are the diaries of John Evelyn and Samuel Pepys, both of whom kept a careful record of their daily life and all that was going on about them. There is no history of their time which gives such a familiar picture of the life of the day, and the people who figured in it, as either of these two books.

Born 1632. Died 1703.

Evelyn was a gentleman of leisure and fortune, of rather scholarly habits, and the author of several books, all dignified and learned. He had a fine house and a good library, and his home was resorted to by many literary men and men of learning, who were his friends. Cowley, the poet, was one of his intimates, and Jeremy Taylor, with whom he kept up many years a correspondence, was a very dear friend. Cowley and Evelyn sympathized in a taste for gardening, and the latter was noted for the beauty of his trees and plants, his fine hedges and smooth lawns. When Peter the Great, Czar of Russia, was in London in the last part of the century, he rented Evelyn's

Born 1620. Died 1706.

house for his royal quarters, and
to take a barbaric delight in den
his landlord. Among other thin
self by driving a wheel-barrow
hedge, which Evelyn had cultivat

Evelyn's diary, although it is fu
fied like himself, and makes us r
ings and comings.

Samuel Pepys, who was his exa
has left a journal less di
more amusing. Pepys
Navy, and was constantly
he knew all that was said and done
cellent faculty for business; was a
taste in artistic matters, in books
He also wrote some books, now a
kept his journal in a sort of short-
was not deciphered till long after
never would have written with qui
shown there if he had known that t
we should be gloating over his page
it to be solely for his own eye, he w
the petty occurrences of his day, mi
that goes to make up history. He
ful old gossip, who tells the color of
much his new suit cost; when his w
how she looked in it; what play
and how he liked it; how King Ch
was on his most unkingly behavior;
the palace at Whitehall. One gets
idea of the manners of the court of
what very bad manners they were.
see what a gossip Samuel Pepys was
both little and great, he touches on i
to quote most of his entries for the
1663, beginning with the last Sunda

Born 1632.
Died 1703.

Nov. 29th—Lord's day.—This mornin

cloth suit, trimmed with scarlet ribbons, very neat, with my cloak lined with velvet, and a new beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black silk knit canons* I bought a month ago.

30th.—At Whitehall, Sir W. Penn and I met the Duke (of York) in the matted gallery, and then he discoursed with us; and by and by my Lord Sandwich came and stood by and talked, but it being St. Andrews' Day, he went to the chapel and we parted.†

Dec. 1st.—After dinner I went to the Guildhall to hear a trial at King's Bench before Lord Chief Justice Hyde, about the insurance of a ship, and it was pleasant to see what mad sort of testimony the seamen did give, and could not be got to speak in order, and then their terms such as the Judge could not understand; and to hear how sillily the counsel and Judge would speak as to the terms necessary in the matter, would make one laugh: and above all, a Frenchman that was forced to speak in French and took an English oath he did not understand, and had an interpreter sworn to tell what he said, which was the best testimony of all.

7th.—I hear there was last night the greatest tide that ever was remembered in England to have been in this river—all Whitehall having been drowned. To Whitehall, and anon the King, the Duke, (of York) and the Duchess come to dinner in the vane-room, where I never saw them before; but it seems since the tables are done he dines there altogether. The Queen is pretty well, and goes out of her chamber to her little chapel in the house. The King of France, they say, is hiring of sixty sail of ships of the Dutch, but it is not said for what design.

10th.—To St. Paul's churchyard, to my book seller's, and could not tell whether to lay out my money for books of pleasure, as plays, which my nature was most earnest in; but at last, after seeing Chaucer, Dugdalle's History of Pauls, Stow's London, besides Shakspeare's, Jonson's and Beaumont's plays, I at last chose Fuller's Worthies, a collection of letters of Slote, with another little book or two, all of good use or serious pleasure; and Hudibras,‡ both parts, the book now in greatest fashion for drollery, though I cannot, I confess, see where the wit lies. My mind being thus settled, I went by link home, and so to my office, and to read in Rushworth, and so home to supper and to bed. Calling at Wotton's, my shoemaker's, to-day, he tells me that Sir. H. Wright is dying; and that Harris is come to the

* Canons were embroidered or ornamental tops to the silk stockings worn by men.

† Whitehall was the favorite palace of Charles. American boys and girls will be interested to know that this Penn was the Admiral Penn, father of him who founded Pennsylvania. The Duke of York was afterwards James II.

‡ Butler's Satire—see description.

Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half,
O, dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon
Irrevocably dark, total eclipse,
Without all hope of day!
O first created Beam, and thou great Word,
Let there be light, and light was over all,
Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
The sun to me is dark
And silent as the moon
When she deserts the night,
Hid in the vacant interlunar cave,
Since light so necessary is to life,
And almost life itself, if it be true
That light is in the soul,
She all in every part; why was the sight
To such a tender ball as th' eye confined,
So obvious, and so easy to be quenched,
And not as feeling through all parts diffused,
That she might look at will through every pore?
Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
As in the land of darkness, yet in light.
To live a life half dead, a living death,
And buried; but, O yet more miserable,
Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,
Buried, yet not exempt
By privilege of death and burial
From most of other evils, pains and wrongs,
But hereby made obnoxious more
To all the miseries of life—
Life in captivity
Among inhuman foes."

Milton's later poetry must be read in grand passages like these, to be appreciated. There are few young readers who will read *Paradise Lost* entire, and they will be likely to enjoy his youthful poems most. Indeed, we are not apt to be pleased with epic poetry in youth. The incidents of the dramatic poem, or the music of the lyric, then please us best, and it is not until life is mature that we can see fully the greatness of Homer and Milton, and set them in their place among the poets of the world.

But if we did not care for Milton's poetry, we should

great men have their stands at such and such places, and shoot at what they have a mind to; and this is their hunting. Against a public hunting the Duke orders that no wolves be killed by the people. And whatever harm they do, the Duke makes good to the person that suffers it, as Mr. Harrington instanced in the house where he lodged, where a wolf broke into a hog-sty and bit three or four pieces off the back of the hog before the house could come to help it, and the man of the house told him there were three or four wolves thereabouts that did great hurt; but it was no matter, for the Duke was to make it good to him, otherwise he would kill them.

21st. To Shoe Lane to see a cock-fight at a new pit there, a spot I never was at in my life; but, Lord! to see the strange variety of people, from parliament, men to the poorest 'prentices, bakers, brewers' butchers, draymen and what not, and all these fellows one with another cursing and betting. I soon had enough of it. It is strange to see how people of this low rank, that look as they had not bread to put into their mouths, shall bet three or four pounds at a time and lose it, and yet bet as much at the next battle, so that one will lose £10 and £20 at a meeting.

28th. Walking through Whitehall I heard the King was gone to play at tennis, so I went down the new tennis court and saw him and Sir Arthur Slingsby play against my Lord of Suffolk and my Lord Chesterfield. The King beat three and lost two sets; they all, and he particularly, playing well, I thought. Thence went and spoke with the Duke of Albermarle about his wound, but I find him a heavy, dull man by his answers to me. The Duchess of York is fallen sick with the measles.

31st. The Queen, after a long and sore sickness, is become well again; and the King minds his pleasures a little too much, if it please God! But I hope all things will go well, and in the navy particularly, wherein I shall do my duty, whatever comes of it. The great talk is of the design of the King of France, whether against the Pope or the King of Spain, nobody knows, but a great and promising prince he is, and all the princes of Europe have their eye upon him. The Turk, very far entered into Germany, and all that part of the world is at a loss what to expect from his proceedings. Myself, blessed by God, in a good way, and design and resolution of sticking to my business to get a little money with, doing the best service I can to the King also, which God continue. So ends the old year.

You see from this what a garrulous fellow Pepys was, and on how many subjects his diary touches, and yet, in the end, you cannot fail to feel a liking for him, and to be sure that,

Marvell lived in Lincolnshire, a county which was famous for Puritans, and sent so many emigrants to America in the early settlement of New England. After Charles II was restored to the throne, Marvell was sent to represent his native town in parliament, and held that seat in firm opposition to the vices of the rulers. He was a man so wise and witty that the king could not help admiring him, and once sent his lord of the treasury to see if he could not be won over to the royal side. Marvell received his guest hospitably, but gave him mutton for dinner on three successive days. And when the courtier at last offered him place and money to change his politics, the staunch old roundhead told him plainly, that since he could dine contentedly every day on a shoulder of mutton, the king could offer him no inducement to change his colors.

Born 1620.
Died 1678.

Marvell's writings are principally political satires, witty in his time, but not interesting now. He has, however, a few poems that from their sentiment have been able to outlive his age, and I select one of the shortest. It is on *Eyes and Tears*, and is, as you will notice, in the style of the metaphysical poets, with its talk about "watery lines and plummets," and the sun "distilling the world with chemic ray." In spite of this, there are some pretty thoughts in the verses, and the last dozen lines I think are very beautiful.

EYES AND TEARS.

"How wisely Nature did decree
With the same eyes to weep and see,
That, having viewed the object vain,
They might be ready to complain!
And since the self-deluding sight,
In a false angle takes each height,
These tears, which better measure all,
Like watery lines and plummets fall.
Two tears, which sorrow long did weigh
Within the scales of either eye,
And then paid out in equal poise,
Are the true price of all my joys.
What in the world most fair appears,

Yea, even laughter turns to tears,
And all the jewels that we prize
Melt in these pendants of the eyes.
I have through every garden been
Amongst the red, the white, the green,
And yet from all those flowers I saw
No honey, but these tears could draw.
So the all-seeing sun each day
Distils the world with chemic ray,
But finds the essence only showers,
Which straight in pity back he pours.
Yet happy they whom grief doth bless,
That weep the more and see the less,
And to preserve their sight more true
Bathe still their eyes in their own dew.
So Magdalen in tears more wise
Dissolves those captivating eyes
Whose liquid chains could flowing meet
To fetter her Redeemer's feet.

* * * * *

The incense is to Heaven dear
Not as a perfume, but a tear.
And stars show lovely in the night,
But as they seem the tears of light,
Ope, then, my eyes your double sluice,
And practice so your noblest use,
For others, too, can see, or sleep,
But only human eyes can weep."

Another noted poet of this age is Abraham Cowley, a trusted servant and secretary of Charles I, and afterwards devoted to his son, Charles II, who seems to have neglected the poet during his life, and to have contented himself with saying of him after his death, "Mr. Cowley has not left behind him a better man in England."

Born 1618. Died 1667.

Milton prized Cowley highly, and thought him one of the greatest among poets; but he is not so much valued now. Much better than his verses I like his prose essays, of which he wrote a dozen or more. The theme of nearly all his essays is a praise of country life—a life without ambition of

cares, led among green fields and still waters. The titles of the essays indicate this. They are on *Solitude*, *Gardens*, *Agriculture*, *Liberty*, and kindred subjects. It seemed as if in all he wrote, Cowley felt the tediousness and hollowness of a life at court, and longed to be free from it. In his essay on Agriculture he praises above all lives that of the farmer, and in his essay on Greatness he praises a simple house and simple fare above all the luxury of court. His essay on Liberty contains as grand a definition of Freedom as has ever been given. He says, "The liberty of a people consists in being governed by laws which they have made themselves, under whatsoever form it be of government. The liberty of a private man, in being master of his own time and actions, as far as may consist with the laws of God and his country."

In the last of his life Cowley did attain to a little estate in the country about which he had written so much and had so longed for. He did not live very long to enjoy it, and had suffered so many disappointments before getting it, that he was not altogether happy in the realization of his wishes. After a few years of retreat, he died suddenly of cold caught from getting overheated with working in the harvest among his laborers.

Cowley was a versatile writer both in prose and verse. In poetry he has one long epic of which the Hebrew King David, is the hero. He also wrote several plays; but of all his poetry I like much best his shorter pieces. He was very familiar with the Greek and Latin poets, and put many of their verses into so free a translation that they have the merit of an original. His *Songs from Anacreon* are specimens of this easy and free rendering.

Cowley began to write very early, and tells us in one of his essays, titled "Myself," that he wrote verses at thirteen. He says here: "How this love of poetry came to be produced in me so early is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular little chance which filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing

instructions how to fish, enlivened with story or occasional song or ballad, and now and then a good moral lesson drawn from his rich stores of experience. At the end of the day they adjourn to the nearest inn and have their fish cooked for supper. In a succession of days like this the *Complete Angler* passes the time. It is one of the most delightful books to read under a tree in a summer afternoon, even if one does not carry a rod and has no taste for angling. Walton, who became a great favorite with other literary men, and had many friends among the divines, wrote a number of biographies, which are very easy and beautiful in style. Among these are the lives of John Donne and George Herbert, of whom I have already spoken.

Many of the most famous pieces of prose written in this time are sermons, for this was a century which numbered many great preachers, and some of the most famous English divines flourished in the reigns of Charles I and II. South, Stillingfleet, Barrow, Tillotson, all were distinguished and learned preachers. So was Richard Baxter, who wrote those celebrated religious books, *The Saints' Rest*, and *Call to the Unconverted;* Bishop Burnet, who was not only a clergyman but an historian, and wrote a history of his own times; Thomas Fuller, the author of the *Worthies of England*, a series of short biographies of great men, which is full of anecdote and humor, and a charming book to read; and last and best of all is Jeremy Taylor, who has been called the "Shakspeare of divines," because his sermons have the imagery, the grandeur, and the music of a poem. All these preachers, except Baxter, were of the established church of England and all were men of learning, and high in the respect of their contemporaries. But one of the greatest books of the century was written by a dissenting minister, a man very different from these learned dignitaries of the church, a man so poor and ignorant that it is a wonder how he could ever have written such a book. His name is John Bunyan, and his great work the *Pilgrim's Progress*.

John Bunyan wrote a great many books and sermons, but the *Pilgrim's Progress* is the only one which has been much read since his death. There are a few books that go straight to the heart of the world, and never lose their place in it. They may be ever so simple in language, ever so rude in style, but they bear that charm which puts them among the volumes that grace the book shelves of the scholar, or lie, well-worn and shabby, on the table of the peasant, beside the great Bible. John Bunyan, hardly able to write at all, his clumsy letters looking like a child's first attempt at penmanship, wrote such a book in the intervals of his preaching and labor, while he was part of the time an inmate of a jail where he was shut up for his obstinacy in proclaiming the Gospel as it seemed right to him. He had been bred to the trade of a tinker, and accuses himself of being very wicked in his youth, although a habit of swearing, and a great love of ringing the church chimes are among the worst faults of which he accuses himself. His strict Puritanism caused him to think his love for ringing the bells a temptation of the devil, and after his conversion he was for a long time tortured by doubts of his salvation. Among other things, he fancied he was tempted, like Judas Iscariot, to betray his Lord, and heard the words, "Sell him, sell him, sell him," ringing like chimes of bells in his ears, day and night. He took to preaching to relieve this morbid state of conscience, and his plain and homely eloquence was drawing many hearers, when he was arrested for unlawfully proclaiming the gospel and thrown into jail in his native town of Bedford. Here he used to join his wife and children in the weaving of tagged lacings to help in their scanty living, and here the idea came to him of writing the *Pilgrim's Progress.* The wretched old jail in Bedford is consecrated as the place from whence the Pilgrim set out on that journey which has never ceased from that time to interest childhood and age.

Born 1628.
Died 1688.

More than twelve years he was a prisoner, although his

Has reached the pale meridian of the night,
At last, the various supper being done,
It happened that the company was gone
Into a room remote, servants and all,
To please their noble fancies with a ball.
Our host leads forth the stranger, and does find
All fitted to the bounties of his mind.
Still on the table half-filled dishes stood,
And with delicious bits the floor was strewed.
The courteous mouse presents him with the best,
And both with fat varieties were blest.
The industrious peasant everywhere doth range,
And thanks the gods for his life's happy change.
Lo! in the midst of a well freighted pie
They both at last glutted and wanton lie,
When—see the sad reverse of prosperous fate,
And what fierce storms on mortal glories wait—
With hideous noise, down the rude servants come,
Six dogs before ran barking into th' room.
The wretched gluttons fly with wild affright,
And hate the fulness which retards their flight;
Our trembling peasant wishes now in vain
That rocks and mountains covered him again.
O how the change of his poor life he curst!
'This, of all lives,' said he, 'is sure the worst.
Give me again, ye gods, my cave and wood;
With peace, let tares and acorns be my food.'"

One more little bit from Cowley, in a different vein, and we must leave him. This is the ode to a *Grasshopper:*

"Happy insect, what can be
In happiness compared to thee?
Fed with nourishment divine
The dewy morning's gentle wine!
Nature waits upon thee still
And thy verdant cup doth fill;
'Tis filled wherever thou dost tread
Nature's self thy Ganymede.
Thou dost drink, and dance and sing
Happier than the happiest king,
All the fields which thou dost see,
All the plants belong to thee;
All that summer hours produce,

beforehand that good will be victorious. An English critic says, in speaking of this prejudice against allegories, "Some people are as afraid of the allegory as if they thought it would bite them. But if they do not meddle with the allegory, the allegory will not meddle with them." The most devoted reader of the *Pilgrim's Progress* I ever knew was a little girl of six, who never meddled with the allegory, but took it all as a delightful fable, in which giant Despair was as real a giant as those in Jack the Giant Killer, or the other famous Jack of the Bean-stalk.

One great merit of John Bunyan is that he wrote a homely, wholesome style, full of strength and naturalness and the boy or girl who begins early to read such English as this, taking later the noble works of our great poets, will be able to use our language, either in writing or speaking, with a power which can never be acquired by those who only feed their minds with the flimsy stories in modern newspapers and magazines written solely for young people. The passage I select to read is that in which Christian, the Pilgrim, and his friend, Hopeful, who is traveling with him, have lost their way on the journey by turning into some by-path which has taken them off the road, and are overtaken by the night in their efforts to find the right way again:

"Wherefore at last lighting under a little shelter they sat down there till the day broke; but being weary they fell asleep. Now there was, not far from the place where they lay, a castle called Doubting Castle, the owner whereof was Giant Despair, and it was in his grounds they now were sleeping; wherefore, he, getting up in the morning early and walking up and down in his fields, caught Christian and Hopeful asleep in his grounds. Then with a grim and surly voice he bid them awake and asked them whence they were, and what they did in his grounds. They told him they were pilgrims and that they had lost their way. Then said the giant, 'You have this night trespassed on me by trampling in and lying on my grounds, and therefore you must go along with me.' So they were forced to go because he was stronger than they. They also had but little to say, for they knew themselves in a fault. The giant therefore drove

them before him and put them into his castle into a very dark dungeon, nasty and stinking to the spirits of these two men. Here, then, they lay from Wednesday morning till Saturday night, without one bit of bread or drop of drink, or light, or any to ask how they did; they were, therefore, here in evil case, and were far from friends or acquaintances. Now in this place Christian had double sorrow, because it was through his unadvised counsel that they were brought into this distress.

"Now, Giant Despair had a wife, and her name was Diffidence, so when he was gone to bed he told his wife what he had done, to wit, that he had taken a couple of prisoners and cast them into his dungeon for trespassing on his grounds. Then he asked her, also, what he had best further do to them. She asked what they were, whence they came, and whither they were bound, and he told her. Then she counseled him that when he arose in the morning he should beat them without mercy. So when he arose he getteth himself a grievous crab-tree cudgel and goes down into the dungeon to them, and there first falls to rating them as if they were dogs, although they never gave him a word of distaste. Then he falls upon them and beats them fearfully, in such sort that they were not able to help themselves, or to turn them upon the floor. This done, he withdraws, and leaves them there to condole their misery and to mourn under their distress, so that all day they spend their time in nothing but sighs and bitter lamentations. The next night she, talking with her husband further about them, and understanding that they were yet alive, did advise him to counsel them to make away with themselves. So when morning was come, he goes to them in a very surly manner, as before, and, perceiving them to be very sore with the stripes that he had given them the day before, he told them that since they were never like to come out of that place, their only way would be forthwith to make an end of themselves, either with knife, halter or poison; 'For why', said he, 'should you choose to live, seeing it is attended with so much bitterness?' But they desired him to let them go. With that he looked ugly upon them, and rushing to them, had doubtless made an end of them himself, but that he fell into one of his fits (for sometimes in sunshiny weather he fell into fits), and lost, for a time, the use of his hands, wherefore he withdrew, and left them as before, to consider what to do."

Then the prisoners consult together what is best to do. Christian is almost of the opinion that they would better die at once, but Hopeful sustains him, and persuades him to endure a little longer.

"With such words did Hopeful, at present, moderate the mind of his brother; so they continued together in the dark that day in their sad and doleful condition.

" Well, towards evening the giant goes into the dungeon again to see if his prisoners had taken his counsel. But when he came there he found them alive, and, truly, alive was all; for now, what for want of bread and water, and by reason of the wounds they received when he beat them, they could do little but breathe. But I say he found them alive ; at which he fell into a grievous rage and told them that, seeing they had disobeyed his counsel, it would be worse with them if they had never been born.

" At this they trembled greatly, and I think that Christian fell into a swoon ; but coming a little to himself again, they renewed their discourse about the giant's counsel and whether they had best take it or no. Now Christian again seemed for doing it, but Hopeful made reply as followeth :

" 'My brother,' said Hopeful, 'remembereth thou not how valiant thou hast been heretofore ? Apollyon could not crush thee, nor could all thou didst hear, or see, or feel in the Valley of the Shadow of Death. What hardship, terror and amazement hast thou already gone through, and art thou now nothing but fears? Thou seest that I am in the dungeon with thee, a far weaker man by nature than thou art. Also, this giant hath wounded me as well as thee, and hath also cut off the bread and water from my mouth, and with thee I mourn without the light. But let us exercise a little more patience. Remember how thou playedst the man at Vanity Fair, and was neither afraid of the chain nor cage, nor yet of bloody death; wherefore, let us, at least to avoid the shame that it becomes not a Christian to be found in, bear up with patience as well as we can.'

" Now, night being come again, and the giant and his wife being in bed, she asked him concerning the prisoners, and if they had taken his counsel, to which he replied. 'They are sturdy rogues ; they choose rather to bear all hardships than make away with themselves.'

" 'Take them into the castle yard to-morrow, and show them the bones and skulls of those thou hast already dispatched, and make them believe, ere a week comes to an end, thou wilt tear them in pieces, as thou hast done their fellows before them.'

" So when the morning was come the giant goes to them again and takes them into the castle yard, and shows them as his wife hath bidden him.

" 'These,' said he, 'were pilgrims, as you are, once, and they trespassed on my grounds, as you have done, and when I thought

fit I tore them in pieces, and so within ten days I will do you; get you down to your den again.'

"And with that he beat them all the way thither. They lay, therefore, all day on Saturday in a lamentable case as before. Now, when night was come, and when Mrs. Diffidence and her husband were got to bed, they began to renew their discourse of their prisoners, and withal the old giant wondered that he could neither by his blows or his counsels bring them to an end. And with that his wife replied:

"'I fear,' said she, 'that they live in hopes that some one will come to relieve them, or that they have picklocks about them, by means of which they hope to escape.'

"'Sayest thou so, my dear,' said the giant, 'I will, therefore, search them in the morning.'

"Now, a little before day, Christian, as one half amazed, broke out into this passionate speech: 'What a fool,' quoth he, 'am I, thus to lie in this stinking dungeon, when I may as well walk in liberty. I have a key in my bosom, called Promise, that will, I am persuaded, open any lock in Doubting Castle.'

"Then said Hopeful, 'That is good news, good brother; pluck it out of thy bosom, and try.'

Then Christian pulled it out of his bosom and began to try at the dungeon door, whose bolt, as he turned the key, gave back, and Christian and Hopeful both came out. Then he went to the outward door that leads into the castle yard, and with his key, opened that door also. After that, he went to the iron gate for that must be opened too, but that lock went desperately hard, yet the key did open it. Then they must open the gate to make their escape with speed, but that gate as it opened, made such a creaking that it waked Giant Despair, who, hastily rising to pursue his prisoners, felt his limbs to fail, for his fits took him again, so that he could by no means go after them. Then they went on and came to the King's highway, and so were safe because they were out of his jurisdiction.

And when they were gone over the stile, they began to contrive with themselves what they should do at that stile to prevent those that shall come after them from falling into the hands of Giant Despair. So they consented to erect there a pillar and to engrave upon the side thereof a sentence: "Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle, which is kept by Giant Despair, who despiseth the king of the celestial country and seeks to destroy his holy pilgrims." Many, therefore, that followed after, read what was written and escaped the danger. This done, they sang as follows:

"Out of the way we went, and then we found
What 'twas to tread upon forbidden ground;

And let them that come after, have a care,
Lest heedlessness makes them as we, to fare,
Lest they, for trespassing his prisoners are,
Whose castles's doubting, and whose name 's Despair."

I cannot better end my praise of this book, for which I have a profound love and reverence, founded on long and very early acquaintance, than by quoting a few words from Macaulay's essay on it:

"There is no book in our literature on which we would so readily stake the fame of the old unpolluted English language; no book which shows how rich that language is in its own proper wealth, and how little it has been improved by all it has borrowed. Cowper said forty or fifty years ago, that he dared not name John Bunyan in his verse, for fear of moving a sneer. * * We live in better days, and we are not afraid to say that although there are many clever men in England during the latter half of the seventeenth century, there were only two great creative minds: one of those minds produced Paradise Lost, and the other, Pilgrim's Progress."

TALK XXXIV.

On the Drama of the Restoration; John Dryden and His Contemporaries.

There was a great falling off in dramatic poetry after Shakspeare's death, and that branch of literature seemed to decay as quickly as it had grown and blossomed. The Puritans, while they were in power, opposed the stage and all work written for it. They were inclined to think life too serious a business for amusement of any sort. This gloom and severity aided to the great reaction which followed when the Royalists came back to the control of affairs. As soon as Charles II was proclaimed king, a dramatic merry-making began. Sir William Davenant, who had been poet-laureate to Charles I, took the management of a theater

nd imported such fine sceneries from France as the bare oards of the English stage had never before seen. The witty men of the time, many of them nobles of Charles' Court, began to write plays. Everybody thronged to the heaters, among the rest Samuel Pepys, who in January, 661, writes in his diary: "To the theater, where was acted *Beggar's Bush*, it being very well done, and here, the first ime that ever I saw women come upon the stage." Up to his date all the women parts had been acted by men or oys and one of the innovations of this new revival of the rama was to introduce actresses.

Some of the poets I have before mentioned among the yric poets were play-writers. Sir John Suckling, Abraham Cowley, Sir Charles Sedley, all were successful in that line. n the reign of Charles II the dramatists were nearly as plenty s they had been in the Elizabethan age. Many of their vorks, which are now worthless as literature, are written in n easy, natural dialogue, that flows from the pen just as it alls from the lips; but one finds in these plays few touches f nobleness, or the indication of any good purpose in the riting. The worst vices of the dissolute age are faithfully eflected in these comedies. Some of the more marked ames among the dramatists are Davenant, Otway, Lee, adwell, Etheridge and Wycherly.

Davenant belonged both to the time of Charles I and arles II. He was a fertile writer of plays of the school nded in the Elizabethan age, and was an imitator of the at Shakspeare. Otway wrote one or two plays of a d deal of power, and is interesting from his sad fate. died of starvation, after a life of struggle and poverty. cherly was a gifted writer of comedy, sparkling with and full of invention. If he had lived in an age of er manners and morals, his comedies might have deted us at the present day, but as they held the mirror o the vices of his own time, and reflected manners that disgusting to a purer age, his works are almost entirely nown.

The greatest dramatist who appeared after the great line of Elizabethan dramatists had vanished, was John Dryden. And it is not only as a dramatic poet that he holds a place in literature. He wrote odes, lyrics, satires, epics, poetry in almost every vein, and besides this, vigorous and manly prose.

Born 1631. Died 1700.

Dryden holds a high position in the history of literature, and had an influence over his own age which lasted long after his death. He helped to form a new taste in poetry, and to fix rules for poetic art which were more exact and elegant than had been used before. What we are most impressed with in the great Elizabeth poets is the spontaneity of their genius; we feel that they were poets born rather than made. In Dryden's time there was a marked change—poetry began to be considered an art more than ever before; rules were laid down, criticism on forms was more severe. This was partly through the influence of French taste, which had been exerted over the new school of writers who sprang up in the court of Charles II, many of whom had lived in France while that prince was exiled from his country. The French style was an artificial, highly polished style: in poetry, especially the drama, they had never struck out into original methods as the English had done. Their plays had been modeled on the great dramatists of the Greeks, made according to certain fixed, absolute rules of art. All French classic poetry followed the same line and plummet mode of measure as their drama, its rules were laid out as if verse-making were a craft as exact in its methods as shoe-making. This style now became the fashion in England, and you will perceive that there are fashions in literature as well as fashions in dress. Dryden was a man of genius, but of the sort of genius which would be likely to adapt itself to the taste of his age; not like Milton or Shakspeare, a man who would compel taste to follow him. And Dryden was also a man of painstaking and thorough industry, who having chosen any style, would perfect it and refine it to the uttermost. He accordingly set to work to

refine and polish his verse as no poet before had ever done. Consequently his poetry was almost artificially perfect, although I think we shall agree that it never touches the heart as Shakspeare or Milton does, or seizes on the imagination as does Spenser's poetry.

Unlike Milton, Dryden believed in rhyme. He said Milton did not rhyme in Paradise Lost, because he could not write smooth and elegant rhymes, and he actually made a rhyming opera out of Paradise Lost, and fancied it an improvement on Milton's mighty verse. This is as bad as if he had taken the sonatos of Beethoven and set them to be ground out by a traveling musician on a hand-organ. He had a great fancy for altering the older poets. He put some of Chaucer's Tales into his more fashionable verse, and rewrote Shakspeare's *Tempest*, adding new characters and scenes to this grand play. It is difficult to forgive any poet such stupidity. Yet in spite of this Dryden was so great a master that he compels admiration, and he was also great enough to recognize the grandeur of Shakspeare and Milton, when the age around him was blind to their superiority.

He wrote such a number of plays (twenty-seven in all) that I do not attempt to mention them. I like best, *All for Love*, *Don Sebastian*, *The Indian Queen* and *The Indian Emperor*. *All for Love* is a play on the same subject as Shakspeare's Antony and Cleopatra. Dryden says of this play that it is the one of his works which he wrote purely to please himself, the rest were to please the people. This is not written in rhyme, as so many of his dramatic works are, and to my taste is the finest of all his plays. I, therefore, select a scene from this as the best specimen of his dramatic style. You can contrast it for criticism with one of Shakspeare's scenes from Antony and Cleopatra. Antony has just been told of Cleopatra's death, and is left with his faithful friend, Ventidius, one of the generals of his army.

Antony. O Ventidius,
What should I fight for now? my queen is dead.
I was but great for her; my power, my empire,

Were but my merchandise to buy her love,
And conquered kings my factors. Now she's dead,
Let Cæsar take the world,
An empty circle, since the jewel's gone
Which made it worth my strife. My being's nauseous,
For all the bribes of life are gone away.
Ventidius. Would you be taken?
Ant. Yes, I would be taken,
And as a Roman ought—dead, my Ventidius,
For I'll convey my soul from Cæsar's reach
And lay down life myself. 'Tis time the world
Should have a lord, and know whom to obey.
We two have kept its homage in suspense
And bent the globe, on whose each side we trod
Till it was dented inwards. Let him walk
Alone upon it. I'm weary of my part;
My torch is out, and the world stands before me
Like a black desert at the approach of night.
I'll lay me down and stray no further on.
Ventidius. I could be grieved
But that I'll not outlive you; choose your death,
For I have seen him in such various shapes
I care not which I take. I'm only troubled
The life I bear is worn to such a rag
'Tis scarce worth living. I could wish, indeed,
We threw it from us with a better grace;
That, like two lions taken in the toils,
We might at last thrust out our paws and wound
The hunters that inclose us.
Antony. I have thought on it—
Ventidius, you must live.
Ventidius. I must not, sir.
Ant. Wilt thou not live, to speak some good of me,
To stand by my fair fame, and guard the approaches
From the ill tongues of men?
Vent. Who shall guard mine
For living after you?
Ant. Say, I command it.
Vent. If we die, well. Our deaths will speak themselves,
And need no living witness.
Ant. Thou hast loved me,
And fain I would reward thee; I must die.
Kill me! and take the merit of my death

To make thee friends with Cæsar.
Vent. Thank your kindness;
You said I loved you, and in recompense
You bid me turn a traitor. Did I think
You would have used me thus? That I should die
With a hard thought of you?
Ant. Forgive me, Roman.
Since I have heard of Cleopatra's death
My reason bears no rule upon my tongue,
But lets my thoughts break all at random out.
I've thought better. Do not deny me twice.
Vent. By Heaven! I will not,
Let it not be to outlive you.
Ant. Kill me first,
And then die thou: for 'tis but just thou serve
Thy friend before thyself.
Vent. Give me your hand,
We soon shall meet again. Now, farewell, Emperor.
[They embrace.]
Methinks that word too cold to be my last;
Since death sweeps all distinctions,
Farewell, *friend!*
That's all—
I will not make a business of a trifle;
And yet I cannot look on you and kill you.
Pray turn your face.
Ant. I do; strike home—be sure!
Vent. Home, as my sword will reach
[Ventidius kills himself.]
Ant. O thou mistak'st;
That wound was none of thine; give it me back;
Thou robb'st me of my death.
Vent. I do, indeed;
But think 'tis the first time I e'er deceived you,
If that may plead my pardon. And you gods,
Forgive me, if you will, for I die perjured
Rather than kill my friend. *[Dies.]*
Ant. Farewell! Ever my leader, even in death;
My queen and thou have got the start of me
And I am the lag of honor. Gone so soon?
Is death no more? he used him carelessly
With a familiar kindness ere he knocked,
Ran to the door, and took him in his arms,

As who should say, you're welcome at all hours,
A friend need give no warning. Books had spoiled him
For all the learned are cowards by profession. 'Tis not worth
My further thought, for death, for aught I know,
Is but to think no more. Here 's to be satisfied.
[Falls on his sword.]
I've missed my heart. Oh! unperforming hand,
Thou never could have erred in a worse time.
My fortune jades me to the last, and death
Like a great man, takes state, and make me wait
For my admittance. Some perhaps from Cæsar;
[Noise heard within.]
If he should find me living, and suspect
That I played booty with my life; I'll mend
My work ere they can reach me.
[Rises to his knees. Enter Cleopatra, Charmin and Isas.]
Cleo. Where is my lord? Where is he?
Char. There he lies,
And dead Ventidius by him.
Cleo. My fears were prophets. I am come too late.
O! that accursed Alexas. *[She runs to Antony.]*
Ant. Art thou living? Or am I dead before I knew, and thou
The first kind ghost that meets me?
Cleo. Help me seat him.
Send quickly, send for help. *[They place Antony in a chair.]*
Ant. I am answered.
We live both. Sit thee down, my Cleopatra.
I'll make the most I can of life, to stay
A moment more with thee.
Cleo. How is it with you?
Ant. 'Tis as with a man
Removing in a hurry, all packed up
But one dear jewel that his haste forgot,
And he, for that, returns upon the spot.
So I come back for thee.
Cleo. Too long, ye heavens, ye have been cruel to me;
Now show your mended faith, and give me back
This fleeting life.
Ant. It will not be, my love.
I keep my soul by force.
Say but thou art not false.
Cleo. 'Tis now too late
To say I'm true. I'll prove it, and die with you.

* * *

Ant. Enough; my life's not long enough for more.
Thou say'st thou wilt come after; I believe thee,
For I can now believe whate'er thou say'st,
That we may part more kindly.
Cleo. I will come;
Doubt not, my life, I'll come, and quickly, too;
Cæsar shall triumph o'er no part of thee.
Ant. But grieve not, while thou stayest
My last disastrous times.
Think we have had a clear and glorious day,
And heaven did kindly, to delay our storm
Just till our close of evening. Ten years' love,
And not a moment lost, but all improved
To the utmost joys;—what ages we have lived!
And now to die each other's, and so dying,
While hand in hand we walk in groves below,
Whole troops of lovers' ghosts shall flash about us,
And all the train be ours.
Cleo. Your words are like the notes of dying swans,
Too sweet to last. Were there so many hours
For your unkindness, and not one for love——
Ant. No, not a minute. This one kiss—
More worth than all I leave to Cæsar.— *[He dies.]*
Cleo. My lord! my lord! speak, if thou yet have being!
Sign to me, if you cannot speak, or cast
One look. Do anything that shows you live.
Iras. He's gone too far to hear you,
And this, you see, a lump of senseless clay,
The leavings of a soul.

I think that this scene shows Dryden at his very best. His rhymed dramas (and over one-third of his plays are entirely rhyme) do not approach this in nobility. I will give you a few lines from the *Indian Emperor*, the scenes of which are laid in Peru, to show you his rhymed style. As the play opens, the principal characters Cortes and Pizarro, the Spanish invaders, thus express their delight at the beauty of this new country on whose shores they have landed:

[Enter Cortez and Pizarro with their company.]
Cortez. On what new happy climate are we thrown,

So long kept secret and so lately known.
As if our old world modestly withdrew,
And here in private had brought forth a new.
Pizarro. Corn, oil and wine, are wanting in this ground,
In which our countries fruitfully abound.
As if this infant world yet unarrayed,
Naked and bare in Nature's lap were laid.
No useful arts have yet found footing here,
But all untaught and savage doth appear.
Cortez. Wild and untaught are terms which we alone,
Invent for fashions differing from our own,
For all their customs are by nature wrought,
But we by art unteach what nature taught.
Pizarro. In Spain, our springs, like old men's children, be
Decayed and withered from their infancy.
No kindly showers fall on our barren earth
To watch the season in a timely birth;
Our summer such a russet livery wore
As in a garment often dyed appears.
Cortez. Here nature spreads her fruitful sweetness round,
Breathes on the air and broods upon the ground
Here nights and days the only seasons be,
The sun no climate does so gladly see;
When forced from hence, to view our parts, he mourns,
Takes little journeys and makes quick returns.

And thus the scene continues in praise of this new fairy-land of America, which they are soon to stain with the blood of their conquered victims. I think, even from this little extract, you will decide that tragedy does not move well to alternate rhymes, and that all its grandeur departs when it is set to a see-saw measure.

As a better specimen of his rhymes, I shall quote *Alexander's Feast*, which is thought one of the best things he ever wrote. Dryden said himself that it was the best "ode ever written in English." It was composed for a musical festival held in honor of St. Celilia. It is called

ALEXANDER'S FEAST.

'Twas at the royal feast, for Persia won
By Philip's warlike son:
Aloft in awful state

The godlike hero sate
On his imperial throne:
His valiant peers were placed around,
Their brows with roses and with myrtle bound;
So should desert in arms be crowned.
The lovely Thais by his side
Sat, like a blooming eastern bride,
In flower of youth and beauty's pride.
Happy, happy, happy pair;
None but the brave!
None but the brave
None but the brave deserves the fair.

Timotheus placed on high
Amid the tuneful choir,
With flying fingers touched the lyre;
The trembling notes ascend the sky,
And heavenly joys inspire.
The song began from Jove
Who left his blissful seats above,
Such is the power of mighty love.
A dragon's fiery form belied the god;
Sublime on radiant spheres he rode,
When he to fair Olympic pressed;
And while he sought her snowy breast,
Then round her slender waist he curled
And stamped an image of himself, a sovereign of the world.
The listening crowd admire the lofty sound.
A present deity! they shout around;
A present deity! the vaulted roofs rebound:
With ravished ears
The monarch hears,
Assumes the god,
Affects to nod,
And seems to shake the spheres.

The praise of Bacchus; then the sweet musician sung
Of Bacchus ever fair, and ever young.
The jolly god in triumph comes.
Sound the trumpet, beat the drums;
Flushed with a purple grace
He shows his honest face.
Now give the haut-boys breath; he comes! he comes!

Bacchus ever fair and young,
Drinking joys did first ordain:
Bacchus' blessings are a treasure,
Drinking is the soldier's pleasure—
Rich the treasure
Sweet the pleasure.
Sweet is pleasure after pain.

Soothed with the sound, the king grew vain,
Fought all his battles o'er again,
And thrice he routed all his foes, and thrice he slew the slain.
The master saw the madness rise,
His glowing cheeks, his ardent eyes;
And, while he heaven and earth defied,
Changed his hand and checked his pride;
He chose a mournful muse,
Soft pity to infuse;
He sung Darius great and good,
By too severe a fate
Fallen, fallen, fallen, fallen,
Fallen from his high estate,
And weltering in his blood;
Deserted in his utmost need,
By those his former bounty fed,
On the bare earth exposed he lies,
With not a friend to greet his eyes.
With downcast look the joyless victor sat,
Revolving in his altered soul
The various turns of fate below,
And now and then a sigh he stole,
And tears began to flow.

The mighty master smiled to see
That Love was in the next degree;
'Twas but a kindred sound to move
For pity melts the mind to love.
Softly sweet, in Lydian measures
Soon he soothed his soul to pleasures.
War, he sung is toil and trouble,
Honor but an empty bubble,
Never ending, still beginning,
Fighting still, and still destroying;
If the world be worth thy winning,

Think, oh think it worth enjoying;
Lovely Thais sits beside thee,
Take the good the gods provide thee;
The many rend the skies with loud applause.
So love was crowned, but music won the cause.
The prince, unable to conceal his pain,
Gazed on the fair
Who caused his care,
And sighed and looked, sighed and looked,
Sighed and looked, and sighed again.
At length with love and wine at once oppressed,
The vanquished victor sunk upon her breast.

Now strike the louder lyre again!
A louder yet, and yet a louder strain!
Break his bands of sleep asunder,
And rouse him like a rattling peal of thunder.
Hark! Hark! the horrid sound
Has raised up his head,
As awaked from the dead.
And amazed, he stares around.
Revenge, revenge, Timotheus cries;
See the furies arise,
See the snakes that they rear
How they hiss in the air.
And the sparkles that flash from their eyes,
Behold a ghastly band,
Each his torch in his hand.
These are Grecian ghosts that in battle were slain,
And unburied remain
Inglorious on the plain.
Give the vengeance due,
To the valiant crew.
Behold how they toss their torches on high!
How they point to the Persian abodes,
And glittering temples of their hostile gods.
The princes applaud with a furious joy,
And the king seized a flambeau with zeal to destroy.
Thais led the way
To light him to his prey,
And like another Helen, fired another Troy.

Thus long ago,
Ere heaving billows learned to blow;

While organs yet were mute,
Timotheus to his breathing flute
And sounding lyre,
Could swell the soul to rage, or kindle soft desire.
At last divine Cecelia came,
Inventress of the vocal frame.
The sweet enthusiast, from her sacred store,
Enlarged the former narrow bounds,
And added length to solemn sounds.
With nature's mother-wit, and arts unknown before,
Let old Timotheus yield the prize,
Or both divide the crown.
He raised a mortal to the skies,
She drew an angel down.

This ode we have just read is one of the most famous in our literature. I have told you Dryden's opinion of it. I leave it now to your own taste to decide whether you prefer it above some of the lyrics of the time of Shakspeare, or some others of the poets of the nineteenth century, whom we shall study later.

Dryden lived to a good old age, and in his last days was regarded as an authority, almost absolute, in all matters of poetry. The place which literary men of his time, and for some time after, were accustomed to use as their meeting-place—a sort of headquarters for the wits and poets—was *Will's Coffee-house.* Here Dryden used to go almost every afternoon; and, as he entered, everybody made way for him to pass to his favorite seat, which was in the warmest corner near the chimney in winter, and on the coolest end of the balcony in summer. Here he sat in a sort of state, the autocrat of letters, and gave his opinions on literary art, till, honored and reverenced by his age, he died in the first year of the eighteenth century, at the age of sixty-nine.

PART V.

FROM POPE TO WORDSWORTH.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

INTRODUCTORY.

DRYDEN'S name stands like a grand land-mark at the end of the seventeenth century. His life had covered a period full of changes. Charles the I had been beheaded, Cromwell had held his stern but able rule over the nation; the "merry monarch," as Charles II was called, had kept up his dissolute revels during the fifteen years he had been King; James II, his brother, who succeeded him, had been forced to give up his crown and flee to France, and Mary, the daughter of James II, with her politic and wise husband, William of Orange, were reigning together on the throne of England when Dryden died, just in the opening year of the eighteenth century. Two years after his death, Mary's sister, Anne, became Queen. Her reign is often called as the *Augustan Age* of literature, a title borrowed from a period in Latin History. During the reign of the Emperor Augustus Cæsar, Latin poetry rose to its greatest height in elegance. The poets of that day worked to make the language pure and polished, and their verse perfect according to established rules. And as the Emperor Augustus was one of the patrons of literature, and it throve under his fostering care, the age has been known as the Augustan Age. And hence it is that the period in English, which is claimed to resemble this era in Roman history, received the name of the Augustan Age.

1702.

You will see that the work of Dryden in poetry and criticism had been leading up to a new taste in literature. The French had always imitated the ancients, especially in their work for the stage. Form and method were in their eyes two of the most important requirements in poetry. Following them, the new school of English writers began to consider the artificial finish of a verse the great test of its merit. Dryden had made verse in his day more artificially perfect than it had ever been. The best writers among those who followed him improved upon their master. The writers of the Elizabethan age, even Shakspeare and Milton, were looked down upon as poets who did very well in their day, but did not understand the true art by which poetry was manufactured. This was the aspect of the popular taste towards poetry when Dryden died, and as he had, more than most men, set the fashion and laid down the rules for the time in which he lived, it was natural that his influence should extend into the age that followed. That he did have such an influence we shall recognize in studying the works of Pope, the greatest poet of the Augustan age.

We shall notice in reading the leading writers of this new period in English literature, that many of its greatest productions in poetry and in prose are *satires*. Both Latin and French literature were distinguished for satirical power, but until Dryden's time English literature had not been distinguished for its satire. But with the polish of the French school, these writers began to borrow the keenness of its satire, which held up to laughter anything in art, society or politics, which the writer wanted to reform. Satires against persons, too, became common, and the poet could in this way use his talents as a means of defense against those who were unjust to him, or of revenge against those whom he disliked. Dryden's *Mac Flecknoe* and Pope's *Dunciad*, both satires against persons, are two of the most famous English works of this kind written in verse.

Another marked feature of the age was the *clubs*, a

gathering of literary men, or politicians, or any group of men of similar tastes and pursuits, at some general meeting-place where they could discuss subjects most interesting to them with more freedom than at any private house. We have seen that the wits and poets of the sixteenth century were wont to gather at the *Mermaid.* Ben Jonson, a little later, formed a club at the *Devil Tavern*, and Dryden gathered about him the most famous men of the seventeenth century at *Will's Coffee-house.* In the reign of Queen Anne these clubs became the rage. They were generally formed in some of the inns or eating-houses of the time, and you cannot read the history or the literature of the age without finding constant mention of them. Will's Coffee-house continued the chief center for the men of letters, and Pope, Gay, Swift, Arbuthnot, and others, who formed the *Scriblerus Club**, met there. Not far from Will's was another coffee-house known as Buttons', where Addison used to make his headquarters, and where his friends sought him out when they wanted to enjoy the charm of his society. Then there was the *Kit-Kat* Club, formed principally of politicians, but which included also Addison and Steele. This met at a pastry cook's shop, Christopher Kat, who was celebrated for the excellence of his mutton pies. These are two or three among the many meeting-places of the wits and public men of the day, and you can see how these gatherings must have fostered the discussions of all questions which the pens of the writers of the time took for their theme, and what a strong influence on society the clubs of the day exercised. With this glimpse into the Augustan age, we will begin our consideration of some of its chief writers—Pope, Prior and Gay in poetry; Congreve, its greatest dramatic writer; and De Foe, Swift, Addison and Steele, in prose.

* This club had its name from a satire of the time, written by one of its members, John Arbuthnot, to ridicule the pedantic and false taste in literature. The satire was called "Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus."

TALK XXXV.

On Alexander Pope and his School of Poetry.

Alexander Pope was a boy of twelve when Dryden died. He was a very precocious boy, beginning to write verses at eight years, and lisping rhymes almost from his cradle. He was an enormous reader, both in English and the classic writers, devouring all kinds of books as soon as he could read at all. Of course he read and admired Dryden, like all the rest of his age. On one occasion, when eleven or twelve, he induced some friend to take him to Will's Coffee-house, where Dryden sat in state, like a poetical law-giver, almost every afternoon in the year. With what admiring eyes the little boy, who burned with desire to be one day a great poet, must have looked on the old man in his arm chair, surrounded by his court of wits and admirers. It is related that at this visit some one showed Dryden Pope's translation of some Latin verses, and that he patted the school boy on the head in approval, and gave him a shilling. The approval was worth more than the shilling to Pope, we may be sure, and he must have remembered it with pleasure all his life after.

Born 1688.
Died 1744.

Pope is usually called the founder of the *Pope School* of poetry—the school which prevailed all through the eighteenth century; but it was a school of which Dryden had laid a corner-stone. Pope could not but be influenced by Dryden, whom he had read so early and admired so much. But in form and execution Pope excelled his master. He had a delicate, musical ear—an ear that demanded regular cadences—and he improved on Dryden in correctness, and

wrote lines more regular and smooth than had ever been heard before. His rhythm is so regular it sounds to many ears mechanical. His poetry is rhymed, and almost always in couplets; the lines have a see-saw sound, the first half of the verse balancing the last like a pair of scales. As these, for instance:

> "Worth makes the man, the want of it the fellow."
>
> "Slave to no sect, who take no private road,
> But look from Nature up to Nature's God."
>
> "To err is human, to forgive divine."

One can fancy that to read right on for hours, these smooth, balanced lines would be very tiresome, no matter how excellent the sense was. Indeed, it has seemed to some critics that much of Pope's meaning would be as good or better in prose, and that he might have saved himself the trouble of rhyming. These critics claim that the true test of poetry is that its subject matter should transcend prose, and flow naturally into harmonious numbers; that the thought had sought expression in poetry because prose had been a garment too mean and poor to clothe its nobility. If this be so, Pope is not always a poet; but if poetry be the art which puts any thought, commonplace or not, into regular numbers, and almost perfect form, then Pope belongs among the greatest English poets. He was a man in miserable health, with a sickly, deformed body, yet in spite of this he did prodigies of work, and elaborated all he did with the patience of the worker in diamonds, who cuts, polishes, and refines, till the jewel gives out its fullest lustre.

Pope wrote no plays—the first great poet since Shakspeare's age who did not write in the dramatic form—but the last fire of the dramatic spirit seems to have died out in Dryden. Instead he wrote moral essays in verse, the *Essay on Man*, the *Essay on Criticism;* a few lyrics, as the *Ode on St. Cecelia's Day*, which is not as good as Dryden's; a great many epistles to different persons; satires, in which he

is a master; translations and imitations of Greek and Latin authors; and some miscellaneous poems. His translation of Homer's *Iliad* and *Odysey* alone would have made him famous, and he also put Virgil and Horace into English verse, and turned some of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* into modern form, much after the manner of a translation. One of his famous poems (many think it his best) is the *Rape of the Lock*, a lively story in verse. The incident is the stealing of a lock of hair from the head of a belle, by one of her admirers. The subject, which is rather artificial, suits Pope's style; there is no other of his poems in which both style and subject are so in harmony, and this no doubt is one reason of its success. The heroine, Belinda, has been warned by a sylph of the air, her guardian, who superintends her toilets, that some dread event is to happen, but undisturbed by the warning, she begins to dress for an excursion up the Thames to Hampton. Her toilet is thus described:

"And now unveiled the toilet stands displayed,
Each silver vase in mystic order laid.
First robed in white, the nymph intent adores,
With head uncovered, the cosmetic powers.
A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears;
The inferior priestess, at her altar's side;
Trembling, begins the sacred rites of pride.
Unnumbered treasures ope at once, and here
The various offerings of the world appear;
From each she nicely culls with curious toil,
And decks the goddess with the glittering spoil.
This casket, India's glowing gems unlocks,
And all Arabia breathes from yonder box.
The tortoise here and elephant unite,
Transformed to combs, the speckled and the white.
Here files of pins extend their shining rows;
Puffs, powders, patches, Bibles, billets-doux.
Now awful beauty puts on all its arms;
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,

And calls forth all the wonders of her face;
Sees by degrees a purer blush arise,
And keener lightenings quicken in her eyes.

* * * * * * *

"Not with more glories, in the etherial plain,
The sun first rises o'er the purpled main,
Than, issuing forth, the rival of his beams,
Launched on the bosom of the silver Thames.
Fair nymphs and well dressed youths around her shone,
But every eye was fixed on her alone.
On her white breast a sparkling cross she bore,
Which Jews might kiss, and infidels adore.
Her lively looks a sprightly mind disclose,
Quick as her eyes and as unfixed as those.
Favors to none, to all she smiles extends.
Oft she rejects, but never once offends.
Bright as the sun, her eyes the gazers strike,
But like the sun, they shine on all alike.
Yet graceful ease, and sweetness void of pride,
Might hide her faults, if belles had faults to hide.
So to her share some female errors fall,
Look in her face, and you 'll forget them all.

"This nymph, to the destruction of mankind,
Nourished two locks, which graceful hung behind.
In equal curls, and well conspired to deck
With shining ringlets the smooth ivory neck.
Love in these labyrinths his slaves detains,
And mighty hearts are held in slender chains.
With hairy springes we the birds betray;
Slight lines of hair surprise the finny prey.
Fair tresses man's imperial race ensnare,
And beauty draws us by a single hair.

"The adventurous baron the bright locks admired;
He saw, he wished, and to the prize aspired.
Resolved to win, he meditates the way,
By force to ravish, or by fraud betray.
For when success a lover's toil attends,
Few ask if fraud or force attained his ends."

The Rape of the Lock is a poem of society, witty, sparkling, and without earnestness. The poetical essays are in a different vein, and the *Essay on Man* is full of sound philosophy. You may judge of it by this extract:

"Heaven from all creatures hides the book of fate,
All but the page prescribed, the present state;
From brutes what men, from men what spirits know,
Or who could suffer being here below?
The lamb thy riot dooms to bleed to-day,
Had he thy reason, would he skip and play?
Pleased to the last, he crops the flowery food,
And licks the hand just raised to shed his blood.
Oh, blindness to the future, kindly given,
That each may fill the circle marked by Heaven;
Who sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall—
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world.

"Hope humbly then, with trembling pinions soar,
Wait the great teacher, Death, and God adore.
What future bliss He gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blessed.
The soul, uneasy, and confined from home,
Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
Lo, the poor Indian! whose untutored mind
Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
His soul proud science never taught to stray
Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
Yet simple nature to his soul hath given
Behind the cloud-topped hill, an humbler Heaven—
Some safer world, in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste,
Where slaves once more their native land behold,
No fiends torment, no Christian thirst for gold;
To be, content his natural desire,
He asks no angel's wings, no seraph's fire,
But thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

The measure of Pope's verses is almost always the same—in rhymed couplets like these that I have quoted. He has written, however, a few lyrics, and the best known of these, *The Dying Christian to His Soul*, we will read as an example of his style in the ode:

"Vital spark of heavenly flame,
Quit, oh! quit this mortal frame;
Trembling, hoping, lingering, flying—
Oh! the pain, the bliss of dying!
Cease, fond Nature, cease thy strife,
And let me languish into life.

"Hark! they whisper; angels say,
Sister spirit, come away.
What is this absorbs me quite—
Steals my senses, shuts my sight,
Drowns my spirits, draws my breath?
Tell me, my soul, can this be death?

'The world recedes, it disappears!
Heaven opens on my eyes; my ears
With sounds seraphic ring;
Lend, lend your wings! I mount, I fly!
O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

You will notice in reading Pope for the first time how many familiar lines are found in his poetry; lines, perhaps, you have heard without knowing from whence they came. There are few writers so much quoted, and I think it can be proven that a volume of Pope furnishes more familiar quotations than any other in our language except the Bible and Shakspeare. This is because the lines are so even and flowing that they are apt to stick in the memory, as well as because they are so witty and full of point.

Pope's influence on his own age and on the whole century in which he lived was very great. During his life he was a poetical oracle, and he put poesy into a bondage from which it was not freed for a hundred years. Almost every poet up to the last of the eighteenth century, was a follower of Pope. During all these years poetry kept a dead level of correctness until a few men of strong and original genius arose who broke its bonds, and gave it again some of the free and untamed spirit that had inspired it in the Elizabethan Age.

TALK XXXVI.

On Prior, Gay and Parnell.

Far below Pope, in rank, come Prior, Gay and Parnell, all of whom were his friends or acquaintances. Matthew Prior, a man of the world, and a politician who held several fat offices, found leisure to write a great many lines and in a variety of styles—lyrics, narrative poems, epitaphs, epistles and others. He wrote a dull poem on *Solomon on the Vanities of the World*, and another, equally tiresome, called *Alma, or the Progress of the Mind.* We shall probably never get further in our knowledge of these than the titles. His best poems are his shortest ones, and I shall dismiss Prior with one of the prettiest of these short lyrics.

Born 1664.
Died 1721.

"The pride of every grove I chose
The violet sweet and lily fair,
The dappled pink and blushing rose
To deck my charming Chloe's hair.

"At morn the nymphs vouchsafed to place
Upon her brows the various wreath,
The flower less blooming than her face,
The scent less fragrant than her breath.

"The flowers she wore along the day,
And every nymph and shepherd said
That in her hair they looked more gay
Than glowing in their native bed.

"Undressed at evening, when she found
Their odours lost, their colours past,
She changed her look, and on the ground
Her garland and her eyes she cast.

"That eye dropped sense distinct and clear
As any muse's tongue could speak,

When from its lid a pearly tear
Ran trickling down her beauteous cheek.

"Dissembling what I knew too well,
'My life, my love,' I said, 'explain
This change of humour; prithee tell—
This falling tear—what does it mean?'

"She sighed, she smiled; and to the flowers
Pointing, the lovely moralist said,
See, friend, in some few fleeting hours,
See, yonder, what a change is made.'

"Ah! me, the blooming pride of May
And that of beauty are but one:
At morn both flourish bright and gay,
Both fade at evening, pale and gone.

"At dawn poor Stella laughed and sung;
The amorous youth around her bowed;
At night her fatal knell was rung.
I saw, and kissed her in her shroud.

"Such as she is, who died to-day,
Such I, alas, may be to-morrow.
Go, Damon, bid thy muse display
The justice of thy Chloe's sorrow."

John Gay, born in the same year with Pope, much beloved by him in life and mourned by him at his death, was one of the most amiable of all these poets, and was known as a man too good-natured for his own advantage. He began by writing pastoral poems, which really contained some natural pictures of country life, in contrast to most pastorals, which are as stiff and unlike nature as possible. After these, Gay wrote, in contrast to his earlier works, a long epic called *Trivia, or The Art of Walking the Streets of London*, in which he describes city scenes. This last poem is to me exceedingly dull, the only merit I find in it being that the street scenes it paints are interesting as a study of the times. After these achievements in verse he began to write dramas, none of them drawing much attention till he wrote the *Beggars' Opera*, which brought him both fame and money. The

Born 1688.
Died 1732.

characters in this were highwaymen and thieves, the lowest characters in Newgate prison, but they were depicted with humor, accompanied by a biting satire against follies which were found to exist as well in the highest society as among thieves. The hero is the highwayman, Macheath, who narrowly escapes hanging. In one place he says: "As to conscience and nasty morals, I have as few drawbacks upon my pleasures as any man of quality in England; in these I am not in the least vulgar," and Polly, the heroine, says pertly, "A woman knows how to be mercenary, though she has never been in a court or an assembly." Besides such hits as these at the follies and vice of the age, some of the lines contain a vast deal of cynical wisdom. One of the rogues exclaims over his cups, "The present time is ours, and nobody alive has more." "Well I forgive you," says Mrs. Peachum to Polly, "as far as one woman can forgive another."

After the great success of *The Beggars' Opera*, Gay wrote a sequel called *Polly*, which, as almost always happens when one tries to repeat a success, was greatly inferior to the first. Yet he made money by it, and was able to retire in comfortable circumstances, leading a life of retirement the rest of his days. His latest works were fables in rhyme, inclosing a shrewd and wholesome moral. Here is one of the best:

THE MAN AND THE FLEA.

"Whether on earth, in air, or main,
Sure everything alive is vain.
Does not the hawk all fowls survey
As destined only for his prey?
And do not tyrants, prouder things,
Think men were born for slaves for kings?
When the crab views the pearly strands,
Or Tagus bright with golden sands,
Or crawls beside the coral grove
And hears the ocean roll above
'Nature is too profuse,' says he,
'Who gave all these to pleasure me.'

When bordering pinks and roses bloom,
And every garden breathes perfume—
When peaches glow with sunny dyes,
Like Laura's cheek when blushes rise;
When with huge figs the branches bend;
When clusters from the vine depend,
The *snail* looks round on flower and tree,
And cries 'All these were made for me.'
"What dignity's in human nature?'
Says Man, the most conceited creature,
As from a cliff he cast his eye
And viewed the sea and arched sky.
The sun was sunk beneath the main;
The moon and all the starry train
Hung the vast vault of heaven, the man
His contemplation thus began:
"When I behold this glorious show
And the wide watery world below,
The scaly people of the main,
The beasts that range the woods of plain,
The wing'd inhabitants of air,
The night, the day, the various year,
And know all these by Heaven designed
As gifts to pleasure human-kind,
I cannot raise my voice too high—
Of what vast consequence am I?'
"Not of the importance you suppose,'
Replies a *flea* upon his nose.
'Be humble, learn thyself to scan,
Know pride was never made for man;
'Tis vanity that swells thy mind.
What heaven and earth for *thee* designea
For *thee* made only for our need,
That more important *fleas* should feed.'"

One of the prettiest things Gay ever wrote is the ballad of *Black Eyed Susan*, which gave a later writer, Douglas Jerrold, the title for a comedy. And let us note here that one thing for which Gay deserves credit is, that he did not write like so many of his compeers about Dukes and Duchesses, but that in the Beggar's Opera he contrives to wake an interest in the human nature common to all men and women,

just as in the ballad of *Black Eyed Susan* it is the common sailor and his love for whom he seeks our sympathy. This is so much the case in our day that it would not attract notice, but we must remember that it was different in the time of Gay, and that the humanity that makes us all akin, was not so much the subject of the poet's verse.

WILLIAM'S FAREWELL TO BLACK EYED SUSAN.

"All in the downs the fleet was moored;
The streamers waving in the wind,
When Black Eyed Susan came aboard.
'Oh where shall I my true love find?
Tell me, ye jovial sailors, tell me true,
If my sweet William sails among the crew.'

"William, who high upon the yard.
Rocked with the billow to and fro,
Soon as the well-known voice he heard,
He sighed and cast his eyes below.
The cord slides swiftly thro' his glowing hands,
And quick as lightning on the deck he stands.

"So the sweet lark, high poised in air,
Shuts close his pinions to his breast,
If chance his mates shrill call he hear,
And drops at once into her nest.
The noblest captain in the British fleet
Might envy William's lip those kisses sweet.

'"O Susan, Susan, lovely dear,
My love shall ever true remain.
Let me kiss off that falling tear;
We only part to meet again.
Change as ye list, ye winds, my heart shall be
The faithful compass that still points to thee.

* * * * * * *

'"If to fair India's coast we sail,
Thy eyes are seen in diamonds bright.
Thy breath is Afric's spicy gale,
Thy skin is ivory so white.
Thus every beauteous object that I view,
Wakes in my soul some charm of lovely Sue.

'"Though battle call me from thy arms,
Let not my pretty Susan mourn;'

Though cannons roar, yet safe from harm
William shall to his dear return.
Love turns aside the balls that round me fly.
Lest precious tears should fall from Susan's eye.

"The boatswain gave the dreadful word;
The sails their swelling bosom spread.
No longer must she stay aboard.
They kissed, she sighed, he hung his head.
Her lessening boat unwilling rows to land;
'Adieu,' she cried, and waved her lily hand."

Thomas Parnell was a clergyman and a scholar. He wrote one piece which has earned him nearly all the fame he possesses as a poet—*The Hermit*—written in that see-saw rhyme that becomes so tiresome to the ear when we read much of it. These are the opening lines:

Born 1679. Died 1718.

"Far in a wild, unknown to public view,
From youth to age a reverend hermit grew.
The moss his bed; the cave his humble cell;
His food the fruits, his drink the crystal well.
Remote from men, with God he passed his days;
Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise."

I shall not quote *The Hermit* further; it is a poem which I think will not find so many readers in the future as it has found in the past; but there is one little song by Parnell which we will read, that for melody and archness could easily be put among the best songs of the earlier singers—Suckling, Lovelace, or Waller. It is a wonder that a man who could write such a song could have been tied down to such stiff models, and have let his muse grind out the formal measure in which *The Hermit* is written.

"When your beauty appears
In its graces and airs,
All bright as an angel new dropt from the sky,
At distance I gaze, and am awed by my fears
So strangely you dazzle my eye.

"But when, without art,
Your kind thoughts you impart;

When your love runs in blushes thro' every vein;
When it darts from your eyes, when it beats in your heart,
Then I know you're a woman again.

"'There's a passion and pride
In our sex,' (she replied).
And thus (might I gratify both) I would do—
Still an angel appear to each lover beside,
But still be a woman for you."

TALK XXXVII.

On the Author of Robinson Crusoe.

Born 1661.
Died 1731.

Our hearts will always respond to the mention of the name of Daniel De Foe, if we read the story of Robinson Crusoe when we were children—and who of us did not?

Most of these writers of the Augustan Age were men who belonged to the English Church, and were in sympathy with the political party in power. De Foe was much of the time in opposition to both. He belonged to the Dissenters, in religion; in politics he was a Whig, and although a few of his political pamphlets were popular, they brought him, for the most part, only trouble. He was several times fined; three times set in the pillory; imprisoned in Newgate for more than a year, where he had an opportunity to study some of the types of character he afterwards put into his fictions. It was late in life when he gave up political writing and began to write novels. Then he seems to have led a more peaceful life, and the success of Robinson Crusoe proved that he need not depend on politics for either fame or pecuniary reward.

De Foe's writing is the perfection of realism. When he tells a story we feel that it is true; we believe it in spite of knowledge to the contrary. In his own time his stories were accepted as fact, and even to this day it is a disputed

question if some of his novels were not drawn from authentic manuscript, or others taken down from the lips of the narrator. The way in which he gives all the little details of the story, the exact dates, the dress of his characters, the minute descriptions—all make it a reality. Who could ever doubt the truth of a word of *Robinson Crusoe* while reading the story? And the *Account of the Great Plague; The Life of Colonel Jack; The Adventures of Captain Singleton; The Appearance of Mrs. Veal's Ghost to one Mrs. Bargrave*—are all equally realistic.

He wrote two hundred and ten different works, and at last died poor. He was always rising and falling in fortune, one can hardly tell how or why, and says of himself towards the last:

> "No man has tasted different fortunes more:
> And thirteen times I have been rich and poor."

His style cannot be too much admired in this age of superlatives and exaggerated writing. It is the honest English of every-day life—simple, direct, and not many-syllabled. And though he wrote on homely matters, and often of vicious men and women, he wrote with good sense and in the interests of morality. His works are accurate as well as realistic, and often are more valuable than history as a picture of the times.

From the great literary men of his time De Foe stands apart. The rest were united by bonds of friendship and interest. Pope, Gay and Swift were warm friends. Addison and Steele are almost inseparable in our thoughts. It is true that there was once a quarrel and some coldness between Pope and Addison, but they still belonged to the same set and were of one brotherhood. They were all, except De Foe, members of the Scriblerus Club; they hobnobbed together at Will's Coffee-house. But De Foe stands aloof, an object of ridicule and dislike. Pope satirized him in the *Dunciad*; Gay laughed at him; the Scriblerus Club thought very poorly of his writings, and by those men who

should have recognized him as their peer and companion, he was underrated and disregarded. For this, as well as for the gratitude we feel towards the author of *Crusoe*, our hearts warm with sympathy towards De Foe, the author of that immortal book of our childhood.

But De Foe has other heroes beside Robinson Crusoe, whose fortunes we follow with breathless interest through a whole volume. One of these is Colonel Jack, a poor boy, deserted in infancy by heartless parents, and given over to a nurse, on whose death he is thrown helpless and alone on the streets of London. Without a roof over his head, he lives as he can, and thinks himself happy, when on a winter's night, he finds lodging in the warm ashes and cinders of a glass manufactory, where he finds a crowd of boys as wretched as himself, who came there to sleep. Here he meets with an older boy, a young pickpocket, precocious in crime, who undertakes to teach little Jack a trade, by which he can live like a prince. There are few stories more touching than that of the poor boy's first beginnings in crime. It reminds me very much of the story of Oliver Twist, and his adventure with the Artful Dodger, in Charles Dickens' novel. But I shall let Jack tell a part of his story in his own words.

COL. JACK'S FIRST EXPERIENCE IN CRIME.

"Well, upon the persuasion of this lad, I walked out with him; a poor innocent boy, and (as I remember my thoughts very well), I had no evil in my intentions; I had never stolen anything in my life; and if a goldsmith had left me in his shop with heaps of money strewed all around me, and bade me look after it, I should not have touched it. I was so honest; but the subtle tempter baited his hook for me, as I was a child, in a manner suitable to my childishness, for I never took this picking of pockets to be dishonesty; but, as I have said before, I looked on it as a kind of trade that I was to be bred up to, and so I entered upon it till I became hardened in it beyond the power of retreating, and thus I was made a thief involuntarily, and went on a length that few boys do without coming to the common period of that kind of life, I mean to the transport-ship or the gallows.

"The first day I went abroad with my new instructor, he carried me directly into the city, and as we went first to the water side, he led me into the long room at the custom house; we were but a couple of ragged boys at best, but I was much the worse; my leader had a shirt, a hat and a neckcloth; as for me, I had neither of the three, nor had I spoiled my manners so much as to have a hat on my head since my nurse died, which was now some years. His orders to me were to keep him always in sight and near him, but not close to him; nor to take any notice of him at any time till he came to me; and if any hurly-burly happened I should by no means know him, or pretend to have anything to do with him. I observed my orders to a tittle, while he peered into every corner, and had his eye upon everybody. I had my eye directly upon him, but went always at a distance, looking as it were for pins, and picking them up out of the dust as I found them and then sticking them on my sleeve, where I had at last got forty or fifty good pins; but still my eye was upon my comrade, who, I observed, was very busy among the crowds of people that stood at the board doing business with the officers.

"At length he comes over to me and stooping, as if he would pick up a pin close to me, he put something into my hand and said, "put that up and follow me down stairs quickly;" he did not run but shuffled along apace through the crowd, and went down—not the great stairs which we came in at, but a little narrow staircase at the other end of the long room. I followed, and he found I did, and so went on, not stopping below as I expected, nor speaking one word to me, till through innumerable narrow passages, alleys and dark ways, we were got up into Fenchurch Street, and through Billiter Lane into Leadenhall Street, and from thence into Leadenhall Market.

In a quiet place in the market, it not being meat market day, the two boys looked over the spoil which the elder thief had thus thrust into little Jack's hands. It was a gentleman's letter-case full of checks and bills, beside many private notes. Most of the bills are too large for them, but they find one note, the smallest of all, which the elder presents for payment, and gets the money on. Then they divide the spoil, and Jack gets his share. From that hour trouble begins with the poor little vagabond. He has no place to put his money; his ragged pockets are full of holes, and he has no roof over his head, no box, drawer, or any crevice to hide his gains in.

"Nothing could be more perplexing than this money was to me all this night. I carried it in my hand a good while, for it was all in gold, all but fourteen shillings; that is to say it was four guineas and fourteen shillings, and that fourteen shillings was more difficult to carry than four guineas. At last I sat down and pulled off one of my shoes and put the four guineas into that, but after I had gone awhile my shoes hurt me so that I could not go on; so I was fain to sit down again and take it out of my shoe and carry it in my hand; then I found a dirty linen rag in the street and wrapped it up together, and carried it in that a good way. I have often since heard people say when they have been talking of money they could not get, 'I wish I had it in a foul clout.' In truth I had mine in a foul clout, for it was foul according to the letter of that saying, but it served me till I came to a convenient place, and then I sat down and washed the cloth in the canal, and so then put my money in again. Well, I carried it home with me to my lodging in the glass house, and when I went to go to sleep I knew not what to do with it. If I had let any of the black crew I was with know of it, I should have been smothered in the ashes for it, or robbed of it, or some trick or other put upon me for it; so I knew not what to do, but lay with it in my hand and my hand in my bosom, and then sleep went from my eyes. O the weight of human care! I, a poor beggar boy could not sleep as soon as I had a little money to keep, who before that, could have slept upon a heap of brick-bats, stones or cinders, or anywhere, as sound as a rich man does on his down bed, and sounder, too.

"Every now and then dropping asleep, I would dream that my money was lost, and start like one frighted; then find it fast in my hand, try to go to sleep again, but could not for a long while; then start and drop again. At last a fancy came into my head that if I fell asleep I should dream of the money and talk of it in my sleep, and tell that I had money; which if I should do, and one of the rogues should hear me, they would pick it out of my bosom, and out of my hand without waking me; and after that thought I could not sleep a wink more; so I passed that night over in care and anxiety enough; and this, I may safely say, was the first night's rest that I lost by the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches.

"As soon as it was day, I got out of the hole we lay in, and rambled abroad in the fields towards Stepney, and there I mused and considered what I should do with this money, and many a time I wished I had not had it; for after all my ruminating upon it, and what course I should take with it, or where I should put it, I could not hit upon any one thing, or any possible method to secure it, and it perplexed me so, that at last I sat down and cried heartily.

"When my crying was over, the case was the same. I had the money still, but what to do with it I could not tell. At last it came into my head that I would look out for some hole in a tree, and seek to hide it there till I should have occasion for it. Big with this discovery, as I thought it, I began to look for a tree, but there were no trees in the fields about Stepney or Mile-End that looked fit for my purpose; and if there were any that I began to look narrowly at, the fields were so full of people that they would see if I went to hide anything there, and I thought the people eyed me, as it were, and that two men in particular followed me to see what I intended to do.

"This drove me further off, and I crossed the road at Mile-End, and in the middle of the town went down a lane that goes away to the Blind Beggar's in Bethnal Green; when I came a little way in the lane, I found a foot-path over the fields, and in those fields several trees for my turn, as I thought; at last one tree had a little hole in it, pretty high out of my reach, and I climbed up the tree to get it, and came there, I put my hand in, and found, as I thought, a place very fit. So I placed my treasure there and was mightily well satisfied with me; but, behold, putting my hand in to lay it more commodiously, as I thought, of a sudden it slipped away from me, and I found the tree was hollow, and my little parcel was fallen in quite out of my reach, and how far it might go in I knew not, so that in a word my money was quite gone, irrevocably lost; there could be no worm as much as to hope ever to get it again, for it was a vast, great tree.

"As young as I was, I was now sensible what a fool I was before, that I could not think of ways to hide my money, but must come thus far to throw it into a hole where I could not reach it. Well, I thrust my hand quite up to my elbow, but no bottom was to be found, or any end of the hole or cavity; I got a stick off the tree, and thrust it in a great way, but all was one. Then I cried, nay, roared out, I was in such a passion; then I got down the tree again, then up again; I thrust in my hand again till I scratched my arm and made it bleed, and cried all the while most violently; then I began to think that I had not so much as a half-penny left for a half-penny roll, and I was hungry, and then I cried again; then I came away in despair, crying and roaring like a little boy that had been whipped; then I went back again to the tree and up the tree again, and this I did several times.

"The last time I had gotten up the tree I happened to come down not on the same side that I went up and came down before, but on the other side of the tree, and on the other side of the bank also; and behold the tree had a great open place in the side of it close to the ground, as old hollow trees often have; and, looking into the open

place." In my inexpressible joy there lay my money and my linen rag, all wrapped up just as I had put it into the hole: for, the tree being hollow all the way up, there had been some moss or light stuff which I had not judgment enough to know was not firm, and had given way when it came to drop out of my hand, and so it had slipped quite down at once. * * *

"It would tire the reader should I dwell on all the little boyish tricks that I played in the ecstasy of my joy and satisfaction when I found my money. Joy is as extravagant as grief, and since I've been a man I have often thought that had such a thing befallen a man so to have lost all he had, and not have a bit of bread to eat, and then so strangely to find it over again, after having given it over so effectually—I say, had it been so with a man, it might have hazarded his using some violence upon himself."

We cannot follow any further in detail the fortunes of little Jack. Before he gets too deep in his career of a pickpocket to be arrested by the law, he is kidnapped by the captain of a vessel who has given him some drugged liquor, and, while insensible, he is carried off to the colony of Virginia, in America, where he is sold to a master, an English planter who is cultivating lands in these new colonies belonging to England. The time of servitude for which he is sold is five years, and, after he recovers his liberty, Jack manages so well, that he himself becomes a landholder and a prosperous man, and ends his story in great peace and contentment.

During his period of imprisonment in Newgate, De Foe began the publication of a sort of journal called the *Review*, published twice a week, which was somewhat on the plan of the modern newspaper. In this he gave such news, foreign and native, as he could get hold of, and criticisms on politics at home and abroad. Finding that politics alone would not interest his readers, he formed the idea of a *Scandal Club*, whose members should discuss all the topics of the day in his paper. Like most of De Foe's works, the *Review* has passed into obscurity, but I refer to it because this was the forerunner of the *Tatler*, *Spectator*, and other series written by the two famous English writers who are the subjects of our next talk.

TALK XXXVIII.

On Addison and Steele, Editors of The Spectator.

The names of Joseph Addison and Richard Steele are almost as closely interwoven in friendship as those of Beaumont and Fletcher, and their lives were united for a much longer period than those of the two dramatists. They were school boys together in the Charter House school—Addison, the head boy in his class, grave, studious, painstaking; Steele, a merry youngster who got whipped as often as praised, and was gay and light-hearted in spite of the rod and his unmastered lessons. There was always the same difference between them in after life, and to the last of his days Steele always seemed to regard Addison with the same sort of awe he had felt for the boy who was always above him in school.

Born 1672. Died 1719.

Born 1671. Died 1729.

Joseph Addison was one of the most gifted men of his age. He wrote sufficiently well in college to attract attention, and almost as soon as he left his studies he was offered a position in public life. But politics did not suit his taste, and he came back to his books and his pen, rather soured and disappointed by his experience. His earlier works were nearly all of them in verse, and his first success was the tragedy of *Cato*, which had a run at the theater only equalled by Gay's *Beggars' Opera*. But it was as a prose-writer, and particularly as the writer of prose essays, that Addison made his reputation.

It was Steele, not Addison, who began the enterprise that made them both honored among English essayists. While Addison had been trying political life, Steele

had enlisted as a soldier, beginning at the very bottom of the military ladder, but rising rapidly in the scale of promotion, largely from his personal popularity. After he entered the army he discovered his gifts as a writer. In the midst of a wild career he was suddenly checked by a burst of repentance, in which he wrote a tract called the *Christian Hero*, which excited the amazement of his comrades, that a man who practiced so badly could preach so well. Very soon after this he wrote a brilliant comedy, *The Funeral, or Grief a la Mode.* The *Christian Hero* had given him a reputation for piety which, as he says, he felt he did not deserve, and so he struck the balance by a rattling comedy. This was characteristic of good-natured Dick Steele, who was never moderate in any thing, and, as he says, "was always sinning and repenting."

This first comedy was followed by others, which gave him a reputation as a man of wit and genius. He had arrived at middle age, and was living in London, a gay man of the world, a frequenter of clubs, welcome in the best society, a man well-fitted to hold the mirror up to the virtues for which he had a hearty respect and the vices he was never quite strong enough to withstand, when the idea of *The Tatler* came to him.

The Tatler was in plan not unlike De Foe's Review. It was a tri-weekly paper, with a small portion devoted to news, but the larger part of its space was given to a daily essay on subjects most interesting to its readers.

These essays were in the main on social topics; they criticised reigning follies in taste and manners; they exalted what was best and noblest in human nature; "they advocated a general simplicity in dress, conversation and behavior." The purpose was good, and there are few literary works which have had so good and so immediate an influence on the time, as these essays of Steele and Addison.

Addison was in Ireland when Steele began this new enterprise, but he thought, on first seeing it, that he recognized Steele's hand in *The Tatler*, and recognizing that this

mode of writing was the one of all others best suited to his own genius, he sent some contributions to Steele. *The Tatler* lived about two years, and when it was dropped, it was almost immediately succeeded by *The Spectator*, in which the two friends united as partners in full, writing nearly an equal share. This is the longest sustained and the most famous of all their papers. For the greater part of the time it was issued daily, and was published solely as a series of essays, without news or politics. It was followed by *The Guardian*, and by two or three other journals, none of them so long-lived or successful as *The Spectator*, and that stands as the chief among all works of its kind.

I know at this day no more delightful reading than *The Spectator*. Addison and Steele formed just such an admirable contrast to each other as would make the papers a constant variety. Addison, more profound and thoughtful than Steele, had a fund of quaint humor, a little satirical, which touched genially but keenly on all the follies of the time. He was also a critic of merit, and his series of essays on Milton in *The Spectator* drew attention to the unheeded beauty of *Paradise Lost*. Steele, with less judgment than Addison, had abundant wit and pathos, and could move to tears and laughter. They also could work readily together on one conception, as could Beaumont and Fletcher. The delightful characters of the Spectator's Club, *Sir Roger de Coverley*, *Will Honeycomb*, *Capt. Sentry* and the rest, were first drawn by Steele, but Addison entered fully into his conception of them, and made Sir Roger one of his favorite characters, adding to him some of those traits that make the dear old gentleman so delightful to those who have ever read *The Spectator*.

I have just hinted that Steele was not moderate either in his good or bad qualities; he was always at an extreme in both, but as an offset to his vices, he had always generous and noble words for woman. Up to his time, little appeal had been made to the higher virtues in woman, and the fashion-

able comedies painted her a creature without heart or brains. The service Steele did in writing for women and about them, as if they were reasonable beings, is one of the best traits of his essays. As one of his most characteristic pieces of writing, I have selected for your reading, Paper XXXIII, of *The Spectator:*

THE STORY OF LÆTITIA AND DAPHNE, OR THE ART OF IMPROVING BEAUTY.

"A friend of mine has two daughters whom I will call Lætitia and Daphne; the former is one of the greatest beauties of the age in which she lives; the latter no way remarkable for any charms in her person. Upon this one circumstance of their outward form the good and ill of their lives seems to turn. Lætitia has not, from her very childhood, heard anything else but commendations of her features and complexion, by which means she is no other than nature made her, a beautiful outside. The consciousness of her charms has rendered her insupportably vain and insolent towards all who have to do with her. Daphne, who was almost twenty before one civil thing had been said to her, found herself obliged to acquire some accomplishments to make up for those want of attractions which she saw in her sister. Poor Daphne was seldom admitted to a debate wherein she was concerned; her discourse had nothing to recommend it but the good sense of it, and she was always under a necessity to have well considered what she was to say before she uttered it; while Lætitia was listened to with partiality, and approbation sat in the countenances of those she conversed with, before she communicated what she had to say. These causes have produced suitable effects, and Lætitia is as insipid a companion as Daphne is an agreeable one. Lætitia, confident of favour, has studied no arts to please; Daphne, despairing of any inclination towards her person, has only depended on her merit. Lætitia has always something in her air that is sullen, grave, and disconsolate. Daphne has a countenance that appears cheerful, open, and unconcerned. A young gentleman saw Lætitia this winter at a play, and became her captive. His fortune was such that he wanted very little introduction to speak his sentiments to her father. The lover was admitted with the utmost freedom into the family, where a constrained behaviour, severe looks, and distant civilities were the highest favours he could obtain from Lætitia; while Daphne used him with the good humor, familiarity and innocence of a sister, insomuch that he would often say to her,

"Dear Daphne, wert thou but as handsome as Lætitia." She received such language with that ingenuous and pleasant mirth which is natural to a woman without design. He still sighed in vain for Lætitia, but found certain relief in the agreeable conversation of Daphne. At length, heartily tired with the haughty impertinence of Lætitia, and charmed with the repeated instances of good humor he had observed in Daphne, he one day told the latter that he had something to say to her that he hoped she would be pleased with—"Faith Daphne," continued he, "I am in love with *thee*, and despise thy sister sincerely." The manner of his declaring himself gave his mistress occasion for a very hearty laughter. "Nay," said he, "I knew you would laugh at me, but I will ask your father." He did so; the father received his intelligence with no less joy than surprise, and was very glad; he had no care now left but for his beauty, which he thought he could carry to market at his leisure. I do not know anything that has pleased me so much in a great while as this conquest of my friend Daphne's. All her acquaintance congratulated her upon her chance-medley,* and laugh at that premeditating murderer, her sister. As it is an argument of a light mind, to think the worse of ourselves for the imperfection of our persons, it is equally below us to value ourselves upon the advantages of them. The female world seems to be almost incorrigibly gone astray in this particular, for which reason I shall recommend the following extract out of a friend's letter to the professed beauties, who are, as a people, almost as insufferable as the professed wits:

"'M. St. Everemond has concluded one of his essays with affirming that the last sighs of a handsome woman are not so much for the loss of her life as of her beauty. Perhaps this raillery is pursued too far, yet it is turned upon a very obvious remark, that woman's strongest passion is for her own beauty, and that she values it as her favorite distinction. From hence it is that all arts which pretend to improve or preserve it meets with so general a reception among the sex. To say nothing of many false helps and contraband wares of beauty which are daily vended in this great mart, there is not a maiden gentlewoman of a good family in any county of South Britain who has not heard of the virtues of May-dew, or is unfurnished with some receipt or other in favor of her complexion; and I have known a physician of learning and sense, after eight years' study in the University, and a course of travels in most countries in Europe, owe the first raising of his fortunes to a cosmetic wash.

"This has given me occasion to consider how so universal a disposi-

*An encounter in which the opponent is conquered accidentally, and not from the design of the conqueror.

tion in womankind, which springs from a laudable motive, the desire of pleasing, and proceeds upon an opinion not altogether groundless, that nature may be helped by art, may be turned to their advantage. And, methinks, it would be an acceptable service to take them out of the hands of quacks and pretenders, and to prevent their imposing on themselves, by discovering to them the *true art and secret of preserving* beauty.

"In order to do this, before I touch upon it directly, it will be necessary to lay down a few preliminary maxims, viz:

"That no woman can be handsome by the force of features alone, any more than she can be witty only by the help of speech.

"That pride destroys all symmetry and grace, and affectation is a more terrible enemy to fine faces than the small-pox.

"That no woman is capable of being beautiful, who is not incapable of being false.

"And, that what would be odious in a friend, is deformity in a mistress.

"From these few principles thus laid down, it will be easy to prove that the true art of assisting beauty consists in embellishing the whole person by the proper ornaments of virtue and commendable qualities. By this help alone it is that those who are the favorite works of nature, or, as Mr. Dryden expresses it, the porcelain clay of human kind, become animated, and are in a capacity of exerting their charms, and those who seem to have been neglected by her, like models wrought in haste, are capable in a great measure of finishing what she has left imperfect.

"It is, methinks, a low and degrading idea of that sex which was created to refine the joys, and soften the cares of humanity, to consider them merely as objects of sight. This is abridging them of the natural extent of their power, to put them on a level with the pictures at Kneller's.* How much nobler is the contemplation of beauty, heightened by virtue, and commanding our esteem and love, while it draws our observation! How faint and spiritless are the charms of a coquette, when compared with the real loveliness of Sophronia's innocence, piety, good humour, and truth; virtues which add a new softness to her sex, and even beautify her beauty! That agreeableness which must otherwise have appeared no longer in the modest virgin is now preserved in the tender mother, the prudent friend and the faithful wife. Colours artfully spread upon canvass may entertain the eye, but not affect the heart; and she who takes no care to add to the natural graces of her person any excelling qualities, may be allowed to amuse as a picture, but not to triumph as a beauty.'"

* The picture-gallery of Sir Geoffry Kneller, a celebrated portrait-painter, contemporary with Steele.

TALK XXXIX.

On Joseph Addison's Essays.

There are so many noble pieces of writing among Addison's Essays that one hesitates in choosing an extract. I advise every one to keep a volume of *The Spectator* at hand, and cull for herself. In the meantime, I will give some short extracts which show in brief the variety of his humor, and how easily he passes from grave to gay, from lively to severe.

The first is from

POPULAR SUPERSTITIONS.

"Going yesterday to dine with an old acquaintance, I had the misfortune to find his whole family very much dejected. Upon asking him the occasion of it, he told me that his wife had dreamt a strange dream the night before, which they were afraid portended some misfortune to themselves or to their children. At her coming into the room, I observed a settled melancholy in her countenance, which I should have been troubled for had I not heard from whence it proceeded. We were no sooner sat down, but after having looked upon me a little while, 'My dear,' says she, turning to her husband, 'you may now see the stranger that was in the candle last night.' Soon after this, as they began to talk of family affairs, a little boy at the lower end of the table told her that he was to go into join-hand on Thursday. 'Thursday!' says she. 'No, child, if it please God, you shall not begin upon Childermas day; tell your writing-master that Friday will be soon enough.' I was reflecting with myself upon the oddness of her fancy, and wondering that anybody could establish it as a rule, to lose a day in every week. In the midst of these my musings, she desired me to reach her a little salt upon the point of my knife, which I did in such a trepidation and hurry of obedience that I *let it drop by the way*; at which she immediately started, and

said it fell towards her. Upon this I looked very blank, and observing the concern of the whole table, began to consider myself, with some confusion, as a person that had brought a disaster upon the family. The lady, however, recovering herself after a little space, said to her husband, with a sigh, 'My dear, misfortunes never come single.' My friend, I found, acted but an under part at his table, and being a man of more good-nature than understanding, thinks himself obliged to fall in with all the humors and passions of his yoke-fellow. 'Do you not remember, child?' says she, 'that the pigeon-house fell the very afternoon that our careless wench spilt the salt upon the table?' 'Yes,' says he, 'my dear, and the next port brought us an account of the battle of Almanza.'* The readers may guess at the figure I made after having done all this mischief. I dispatched my dinner as soon as I could with my usual taciturnity, when, to my utter confusion, the lady seeing me quitting my knife and fork, and laying them across one another on my plate, desired me that I would humor her so far as to take them out of that figure and place them side by side. What the absurdity was which I had committed I did not know, but I suppose there was some traditionary superstition in it, and therefore, in obedience to the lady of the house, I disposed of my knife and fork in two parallel lines, which is the figure I shall always lay them for the future, though I do not know any reason for it.

"It is not difficult for a man to see that a person has conceived an aversion to him. For my own part I quickly found, by the lady's looks, that she regarded me as a very odd kind of a fellow, with an unfortunate aspect. For which reason I took my leave immediately after dinner, and withdrew to my old lodgings. Upon my return home, I fell into a profound contemplation on the evils that attend these superstitious follies of mankind; how they subject us to imaginary afflictions, and additional sorrows that do not properly come with our lot. As if the natural calamities of life were not enough for it, we turn the most indifferent circumstances into misfortune, and suffer as much from trifling accidents as from real evils. I have known the shooting of a star spoil a night's rest, and have seen a man in love grow pale and lose his appetite on the plucking of a merry-thought. A screech-owl at midnight has alarmed a family more than a band of robbers; nay, the voice of a cricket has struck more terror than the roaring of a lion. There is nothing so inconsiderable which may not appear dreadful to the imagination that is filled with omens and prognostics. A rusty nail or a crooked pin shoot up into prodigies."

*Battle with Spain in 1707.

The following essay from Addison gives a humorous description of *Clubs*, which in Queen Anne's time sprang up in such numbers and with such a variety of objects:

ACCOUNTS OF VARIOUS CLUBS.

"Man is said to be a sociable animal, and as an instance of it, we may observe that we take all occasions and pretenses of forming ourselves into those little nocturnal assemblies which are commonly known by the name of clubs. When a set of men find themselves to agree in any particular, though never so trivial, they establish themselves into a rival fraternity, and meet once or twice a week, upon the account of such a fantastic resemblance. I know a considerable market-town in which there was a club of fat men, that did not come together (as you may well suppose) to entertain one another in sprightliness and wit, but to keep one another in countenance. The room where the club met was something of the largest, and had two entrances, the one by a door of moderate size, and the other by a pair of folding doors. If a candidate for this corpulent club could make an entrance through the first, he was looked upon as unqualified; but if he stuck in the passage and could not force his way through it, the folding-doors were immediately thrown open for his reception, and he was saluted as a brother. I have heard that this club, though it consisted of but fifteen persons, weighed above three ton.

"In opposition to this society, there sprang up another composed of scarecrows and skeletons, who, being very meagre and envious, did all they could to thwart the designs of their bulky brethren, whom they represented as men of dangerous principles, till at length they worked them out of the favor of the people and consequently out of the magistracy. These factions tore the corporation in pieces for several years, till at length they came to this accommodation: that the two bailiffs of the town should be annually chosen out of the clubs, by which means the principal magistrates are at this day coupled like rabbits, one fat and one lean. * * * * *

"The Hum-drum club of which I was formerly an unworthy member, was made up of very honest gentlemen of peaceable disposition, that used to sit together, smoke their pipes and say nothing till midnight. The *Mum* club (as I am informed) is of the same nature, and as great an enemy to noise.

After these two innocent societies, I cannot forbear mentioning a very mischievous one that was erected in the time of Charles II; I mean the club of duelists into which none was to be admitted who *had not fought his man*. The president of it was said to have killed

half a dozen in single combat, but as for the other members they took their seats according to the number of their slain. There was likewise a side-table, for such as had only drawn blood, and shown a laudable ambition of taking the first opportunity to qualify themselves for the first table. This club, consisting only of men of honor, did not continue long, most of the members being put to the sword, or hanged a little after its institution.

"Our modern celebrated clubs are founded upon eating and drinking, which are points wherein most men agree, and in which the learned and the illiterate, the dull and the airy, the philosopher and the buffoon, can all of them bear a part. * * * When men are thus knit together by a love of society, not a spirit of faction, and do not meet to censure or annoy those that are absent, but to enjoy one another; when they are thus combined for their own improvement, or for the good of others, or at least to relax themselves from the business of the day by an innocent and cheerful conversation, there may be something very useful in these little institutions and establishments."

Addison's prose style has ever since his day been regarded as a model, and stands for that which is most stately and polished in English prose. In spite of the fact that his carefully worded sentences sound a little stiff and old-fashioned, we cannot help feeling their charm as they flow from his pen. And there are few names in literature that excite a warmer personal interest in those who are familiar with his life and his writings, than that of Joseph Addison.

TALK XL.

On the Great Dean Swift.

The last writer whom we shall include in the *Augustan Age* is Jonathan Swift, who was a clergyman of the English church and the Dean of the Cathedral of Saint Patrick's, in Ireland, which gave him the title of *Dean Swift*, by which he is best known. He be-

Born 1667.
Died 1745.

gan life, like so many other great men, without fortune, and as a young man was a secretary and poor dependent in the family of Sir William Temple, a politician and noted statesman of the age. Swift seems to have felt poverty and dependence on a rich patron very bitterly. It soured him and spoiled his manners all his life long. At least this is the only explanation, except natural ill-temper, for the fact that his manners were brusque and disagreeable to the worst degree, although in spite of this he had many friends and won the affection of two lovable and accomplished women. His conduct to the two women, both of whom were devoted to him, was heartless; his behavior to people who befriended him was often rude and uncivil, and if we can judge of him through his biographies, he is a man whom we should prefer to know only in his writings. But there he appears a great man. He was a versatile writer, and whatever he wrote was at once noted. His satires in prose were as keen as Pope's rhymed satires; he was as shrewd an observer and could hit off the follies of the age as cleverly as Addison and Steele; he almost rivaled De Foe in his power of painting fiction with the hues of truth; and he was a clever poet besides. Whatever he does, the quality that impresses one in his work is *power*.

The first work which drew notice was *The Battle of the Books*. The question had been raised in France whether modern writers were not as great as the ancient writers. This dispute spread to England. Naturally, in the state of public taste, the greater part of the reading world thought it a terrible heresy to assert that a modern writer could equal those of Greece and Rome, and the valiant few who dared to stand by this idea were hooted at in disdain. In *The Battle of the Books*, Swift sided with the majority, and assailed with the arrows of his satire those who ventured to plead for the moderns.

The Battle of the Books was soon followed by the *Tale of a Tub*, which made a sensation in literary circles that we could hardly appreciate in reading it now-a-days. This was

the story of three sons who on the death of their father are each bequeathed a coat that with proper usage should last a life-time. These three sons are Peter (the Papist), Martin (the English Church), and Jack (the Dissenter). In those days the pulpits of dissenting preachers were called "Tubs," in derision, from whence *The Tale of a Tub.*

The trouble that these three brothers have with their coats, and the shifts they are put to, to wear them in conformity to their father's will, is very droll to read about, even when we do not care to follow out the satire. I hardly need tell you that although Martin has some share in the ridicule, yet his coat is in very good condition, and comes out bravely beside those of his brothers, Jack and Peter.

Gulliver's Travels appeared about twenty years after *The Tale of a Tub.* In the meantime, Swift had written many prose tracts, and several poems. During this time he was made Dean of St. Patrick's. He was one of those men who, like Dryden, exercised a power over their age. He could wield this power over men and affairs, even from his remote post in Ireland, and when he went to London (and his visits there were frequent) the great metropolis felt his presence. He was a guest at the houses of the great; the Scriblerus Club were honored to have him as a member, and he was the friend of Pope, Gay, Addison, and all the famous men of this Augustan Age.

Gulliver's Travels will live when all the religions and political quarrels that it laughs at are altogether forgotten. It is the account of the journeys of a respectable Englishman, who meets with most extraordinary adventures, which are related in the same realistic way in which De Foe tells his stories. Gulliver is first shipwrecked in the country of the Lilliputians, or little people. Finding himself safe from the sea, and once more on firm earth, he lies down, overpowered with fatigue, and falls into a deep sleep. When he wakes he finds himself besieged by an army of little beings. three inches in height, who have erected scaling ladders to

climb upon his body and are walking about all over him. They have brought their ropes and cables (of the size of common thread), and made an ingenious array of bonds to fasten him to the earth. At the first movement he makes on waking, he breaks a great part of the network of bonds that fasten him; then the little army discharge a flight of arrows, which prick him like needles. Finding, however, that he is not disposed to harm them, they at last lead the "man-mountain," as they call him, to the presence of their emperor, and he is regally installed in the kingdom of Lilliput. He thus gives an account of his manner of living:

"And here it may perhaps divert the curious reader to give some account of my domestics and my manner of living in this country during a residence of nine months and thirteen days. Having a head-mechanically turned, and being likewise forced by necessity, I had made for myself a table and chair convenient enough, out of the largest trees in the royal park. Two hundred seamstresses were employed to make me shirts and linen for my bed and table, all of the strongest and coarsest kind they could get; which, however, they were forced to quilt together in several folds, for the thickest was some degrees finer than lawn. Their linen is usually three inches wide and three feet make a piece. The seamstresses took my measure as I lay on the ground, one standing at my neck and another at my mid-leg with a strong cord extended that each held by the end, while a third measured the length of the cord with a rule of an inch long. Then they measured my right thumb and desired no more, for, by mathematical computation, that twice round the thumb is once round the wrist, and so on to the neck and waist, and by the help of my old shirt which I displayed before them on the ground for a pattern, they fitted me exactly. Three hundred tailors were employed in the same manner to make me clothes; but they had another contrivance for taking my measure. I kneeled down and they raised a ladder from the ground to my neck; upon this ladder one of them mounted, and let fall a plumb-line from my collar to the floor, which just answered the length of my coat; but my waist and arms I measured myself. When my clothes were finished, (which was done in my house, for the largest of their's would not have been able to hold them, they looked like the patch-work made by the ladies in England, only that mine were all of a color.

"I had three hundred cooks to dress my victuals in little convenient huts built about my house, where they and their families lived and

prepared me two dishes apiece, I took up twenty waiters in my hands and placed them on the table; a hundred more attended below on the ground, some with dishes of meat, and some with barrels of wine, and other liquors slung on their shoulders, all which the waiters above drew up, as I wanted, in a very ingenious manner by certain cords, as we draw the bucket up a well in Europe. A dish of their meat was a good mouthful, and a barrel of their liquor a reasonable draught. Their mutton yields to ours, but their beef is excellent. I have had a sirloin so large that I have been forced to make three bites of it; but this is rare. My servants were astonished to see me eat it bones and all, as in this country we do the leg of a lark. Their geese and turkeys I usually eat at a mouthful, and I confess they far excel ours. Of their smaller fowls I could take up twenty or thirty at the end of my knife.

"One day his imperial majesty (the Emperor of Lilliput) being informed of my way of living, desired 'that himself and his royal consort, with the young princes of the blood of both sexes, might have the happiness,' as he pleased to call it, 'of dining with me.' They came accordingly, and I placed them in chairs of state upon my table, just over against me, with their guards about them. Flimnap, the lord high treasurer, attended them likewise with his white staff; and I observed he often looked on me with a sour countenance, which I would not seem to regard, but eat more than usual, in honor of my dear country, as well as to fill the court with admiration. I have some private reasons to believe that this visit from his majesty gave Flimnap an opportunity of doing me ill offices to his master. The minister had always been my secret enemy, though he outwardly caressed me more than was usual to the moroseness of his nature. He represented to the emperor the condition of his treasury; that he was forced to take up money at a great discount; that exchequer bills would not circulate under nine per cent. below par; that I had cost his majesty above a million and a half of *sprugs* (their greatest gold coin, about the bigness of a spangle), and upon the whole, that it would be advisable in the emperor to take the first fair occasion of dismissing me."

On his next voyage after his return from Lilliput, Gulliver encounters a shipwreck which throws him on the coast of Brobdingnag, or the giant's country. In saving himself from the wreck he has seen a huge monster wading in the surf, but escapes from him and makes his way to a field of gigantic grain, whose stalks are forty feet high. As he is

floundering about in this field of grain like a man in a pathless forest, there come into it a party of reapers, each as high as an ordinary church steeple, who stride ten yards at each step. Gulliver at once reflects that he would be as much of a pigmy to these people as the Lilliputians had been pigmies to him, and hiding in the grain he begins to philosophize that nothing is either great or little except by comparison. He goes on thus:

"Scared and confounded as I was, I could not forbear going on with these reflections, when one of the reapers approaching within ten yards of the ridge where I lay, made me apprehend that with the next step I should be squashed to death under his foot, or cut in two with his reaping hook; and, therefore, when he was again about to move, I screamed as loud as fear could make me; whereupon the huge creature stopped short, and looking round about under him for some time, at last spied me as I lay on the ground. He considered awhile, with the caution of one who endeavors to lay hold on a small, dangerous animal, in such a manner that it shall not be able either to scratch or bite him, as I myself have sometimes done with a weazel in England. At length he ventured to take me behind, by the middle, between his finger and thumb, and brought me within three yards of his eyes that he might behold my shape more perfectly. I guessed his meaning and my good fortune gave me so much presence of mind, that I resolved not to struggle in the least, as he held me in the air above sixty feet from the ground, though he grievously pinched my sides, lest I should slip through his fingers. All I ventured was to raise mine eyes to the sun, and place my hands together in a supplicating posture, and to speak some words in a humble, melancholy tone, suitable to the condition I was now in; for I apprehended every moment that he would dash me to the ground, as we do some hateful little animal which we have a mind to destroy. But my good star would have it, that he appeared pleased with my voice and gestures, and begun to look on me as a curiosity, much wondering to hear me pronounce articulate words, although he could not understand them. In the meantime I was not able to forbear groaning and shedding tears, and turning my head towards my sides, letting him know, as well as I could, how cruelly I was hurt by the pressure of his thumb and finger. He seemed to apprehend my meaning, for, lifting up the lappet of his coat he put me gently into it, and immediately ran along with me to his master, who was a substantial farmer, and the same person I had first seen in the field.

"The farmer having (as I suppose by their talk), received such an account of me as his servant could give him, took a piece of small straw about the size of a walking stick and therewith lifted up the lappets of my coat, which it seems he thought to be some kind of covering given me by nature. He blew my hair aside to get a better view of my face; he called his hands about him and asked them, as I afterwards learned, 'whether they had ever seen in the fields any little creature that resembled me;' he then placed me softly on the ground on all fours, but I immediately got up and walked slowly backward and forward to let him see I had no intent to run away. They all sat down in a circle about me, the better to observe my motions. I pulled off my hat and made a low bow to the farmer; I fell on my knees, lifted up my hands and eyes, and spoke several words as loud as I could; I took a purse of gold out of my pocket and humbly presented it to him. He received it on the palm of his hand, then applied it close to his eye to see what it was, and afterwards turned it several times with the point of a pin, but could make nothing of it, whereupon I made a sign that he should put his hand upon the ground; I then took the purse and opening it poured all the gold into his palm; I saw him wet the tip of his finger upon his tongue and take up one of my largest pieces, and then another, but he seemed to be wholly ignorant what they were. He made me a sign to put them again into my purse, and the purse again into my pocket, which, after offering to him several times, I thought it best to do.

"The farmer by this time was convinced I must be a rational creture. He spoke often to me, but the sound of his voice pierced my ears like that of a water-mill, yet his words were articulate enough. I answered as loud as I could in various languages, and he often laid his ear within two feet of me, but all in vain, for we were wholly unintelligible to each other. He then sent his servants to their work, and taking his handkerchief out of his pocket, he doubled it and spread it on his left hand, which he placed flat on the ground with palm upwards, making me a sign to step into it, which I could easily do, for it was not above a foot in thickness. I thought it my part to obey, and for fear of falling, laid myself at full length upon the handkerchief, with the remaider of which he lopped me up to the head for further security, and in this manner he carried me home to his house. There he called his wife and showed me to her; but she screamed and ran back, as women in England do at the sight of a toad or spider. However, when she had awhile seen my behavior and how well I obeyed the signs her husband made me, she was soon reconciled, and by degrees became extremely tender of me.

"*It* was about twelve at noon and a servant brought in dinner. It

was only one substantial dish of meat (fit for the plain condition of a husbandman) on a dish of about four and twenty feet in diameter. The company were the farmer and his wife, three children, and an old grandmother. When they sat down, the farmer placed me at some distance from him on the table, which was thirty feet high from the floor. I was in a terrible fright, and kept as far as I could from the edge for fear of falling. The wife minced a bit of meat, then crumbled some bread on a trencher and placed it before me. I made her a low bow, took out my knife and fork and fell to eat, which gave them exceeding delight. The mistress sent her maid for a small drain-cup which held about two gallons and filled it with drink; I took up the vessel with much difficulty in both hands and in a most respectful manner, drank to her ladyship's health expressing the words as loud as I could in English, which made the company laugh so heartily, that I was almost deafened with the noise. This liquor tasted like a small cider, and was not unpleasant. Then the master made me a sign to come to his trencher side; but as I walked on the table, being in great surprise all the time, as the indulgent reader will easily conceive and excuse, I happened to stumble against a crust and fell flat on my face, but received no hurt. I got up immediately, and observing the good people to be in much concern, I took my hat (which I held under my arm out of good manners) and waving it over my head, made three huzzas to show that I had got no mischief by my fall.

"But advancing forward towards my master (as I shall henceforth call him), his youngest son, who sat next to him, an arch boy of about ten years old, took me up by the legs and held me so high in the air that I trembled in every limb; but his father snatched me from him, and at the same time gave him such a box on the ear as would have felled a European troop-of-horse to the earth, ordering him to be taken from the table. But being afraid the boy might owe me a spite, and well remembering how mischievious all children among us are to sparrows, rabbits, young kittens and puppy dogs, I fell on my knees, and pointing to the boy, made my master to understand as well as I could that I desired his son should be pardoned. The father complied, and the lad took his seat again, whereupon I went to him and kissed his hand, which my master took, and made him stroke me gently with it.

"In the midst of dinner my mistress' favorite cat leaped into her lap. I heard a noise behind me like that of a dozen stocking weavers at work, and turning my head, I found it proceeded from the purring of that animal, who seemed to be three times larger than an ox, as I computed by the view of her head and one of her paws,

while her mistress was feeding and stroking her. The fierceness of this creature's countenance discomposed me, though I stood at the farthest end of the table, above fifty feet off; and although my mistress held her fast, for fear she would spring and seize me in her talons. But it happened there was no danger, for the cat took not the least notice of me, when my master placed me within three yards of her. And, as I have been always told, and found true by experience in my travels, that flying or discovering fear before a strange animal, is a certain way to make it pursue or attack you, so I resolved in this dangerous juncture, to show no manner of concern. I walked with intrepidity five or six times before the very head of the cat, and came within half a yard of her, whereupon she drew herself back as if afraid of me. I had less apprehension concerning the dogs, whereof three or four came into the room, as is usual in farmers' houses; one of which was a mastiff, equal in bulk to four elephants, and a greyhound, somewhat taller than the mastiff, but not so large."

It must be kept in mind while reading the account of Gulliver's life in Brobdingnag, that he was a man six feet in height, and proportionately large, otherwise he will assume to us only Lilliputian size. The whole account of his life there is very amusing; how he was made a pet of by his master's little daughter, Glumdalclitch, who fitted up her doll's cradle for him; how he had a padded box to travel in, which was carried about by Glumdalclitch; how his master made a show of him through the kingdom of the Brobdingnagians and many other interesting adventures, till he finally escapes and gets home again.

Gulliver has other adventures after these which we have read. One in a flying island called *Laputa;* another in the land of the Houghnhums and the Yahoos, in which *horses* are the superior race of animals, and man the inferiors. But none are so interesting as those of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, and these will always be the names by which the great Dean Swift will be longest remembered.

TALK XLI.

English Comedy Writers—Congreve, Vanbrugh, Farquhar.

Three of the most brilliant comedy writers in English were contemporaries of Pope, Swift, and Addison. These were Congreve, Vanbrugh, and Farquhar, whose lively, brilliant, pointed, style in their dialogue comes nearest to the brightness of French comedy of anything we have ever had in our literature. Almost every sentence spoken by their characters is so sharp with wit, that the dialogue reads like a string of epigrams. It is a pity that so much genius was lavished on works of which the motive is coarse and repulsive. Not one of the comedies of this age is now acted, and not one can be read with much profit or pleasure.

William Congreve, the earliest of this trio, was also the most distinguished. He was a man of the world, and thus the better fitted to write comedies which were pictures of the world in which he lived. Nearly all his works were comedies, although his one tragedy, the *Mourning Bride*, was that of which Dr. Johnson said: "If I were requested to select from the whole mass of English Poetry the most poetical paragraph, I know not what I should prefer to an exclamation in the *Mourning Bride*." Here is the paragraph to which Johnson refers—the description of the cathedral at night:

Born 1670.
Died 1729.

[*Almenia and Leonora in the cathedral.*]

Alm. It was a fancied noise, for all is hushed.
Leon. It bore the accent of a human voice.
Alm. It was thy fear, or else some transient wind
Whistling thro' hollows of this vaulted aisle.
We 'll *listen.*

Leon. Hark!
Alm. All is hushed and still as death. 'Tis dreadful!
How reverend is the face of this tall pine;
Whose ancient pillars rear their marble heads
To bear aloft its arched and ponderous roof.
By its own weight made steadfast and immovable,
Looking tranquility. It strikes an awe
And terror on my aching sight. The tombs
And monumental caves of death look cold,
And shoot a chillness to my trembling heart.
Give me thy hand, and let me hear thy voice;
Nay, quickly speak to me and let me hear
Thy voice, my own affrights me with its echo.

Let me say, after reading this, that I know of no subject on which I would not rather take Dr. Johnson's opinion than upon that of Poetry.

But Johnson's verdict was that of Congreve's own time. He had places of profit and honor in abundance; great men were proud to call on him; Pope dedicated to him his translation of the Iliad; and after his death, a great lady had a wax figure made to resemble him, laid out in state in her drawing-room, that she might lavish on it the affection she had felt for Congreve himself.

His comedies are all that can be desired in sparkle and relish of style. Hazlitt, a very good critic, who wrote in the early part of this century, says that "They are full of the niceties of English style, and there is even a peculiar flavor in the words not to be be found in another writer." It is their grossness which makes them now so fortunately unknown? Here is a scene from the opening of *Love for Love*, one of the most famous of the comedies:

(Valentine, who has fallen under his father's displeasure by his extravagant way of living, and is in love with Angelica, who is also displeased with him, has shut himself up in his lodgings and taken to study. He is at his table reading, and Jeremy, his valet, is standing near him).

Val. Jeremy—.
Jer. Sir?

Val. [*Throwing the book at him*]. Here, take away. I'll walk a turn and digest what I've read.

Jer. [*Taking the book, mutters:*] You'll grow devilish fat upon this paper diet.

Val. And d'ye hear, go you to breakfast. There's a page doubled down in Epictetus* that is feast for an emperor.

Jer. Was Epictetus a real cook, or did he only write recipes?

Val. Read, read, sirrah! and refine your appetite; learn to live upon instruction; feast your mind and mortify your flesh; read, and take your nourishment in at your eyes; shut up your mouth and chew the cud of understanding; so Epictetus advises.

Jer. O Lord, I have heard much of him when I waited on a gentleman in Cambridge. Pray, what was that Epictetus?

Val. A very rich man, not worth a groat.

Jer. Humph! and so he has made a very fine feast when there is nothing to be eaten?

Val. Yes.

Jer. Sir, you are a gentleman, and probably understand this fine-feeding; but, if you please, I'd rather live on board wages. Does your Epictetus, or your Seneca here, or any of these poor, rich rogues, tell you how to pay your debts without money? Will they shut up the mouths of your creditors? Will Plato be bail for you? or Diogenes, because he understands confinement and lived in a tub, go to prison with you? S'life, sir, what do you mean? to mew yourself up here with three or four musty books, in commendation of starving and poverty?

Val. Why, sirrah, I have no money, you know it, and therefore resolve to rail on all who have; in that I but follow the example of the wisest and wittiest men in all ages, those poets and philosophers whom you naturally hate for just such another reason, because they abound in sense and you are a fool.

Jer. Ay, sir, I am a fool, and I know it; and yet, Heaven help me, I'm poor enough to be a wit; but I was always a fool when I told what your expenses would bring you to; your coaches, your liveries, your treats and balls, your being in love with a lady that did not care a farthing for you in your prosperity; and keeping company with wits that cared for nothing but your prosperity; and now, when you are poor, hate you as much as they do one another.

Val. * * For the wits, I am in a condition to be even with them. * * I'll take some of their trade out of their hands.

Jer. Now, heaven of mercy continue the tax on paper. You don't mean to write?

*A Greek moralist and philosopher.

Val. Yes, I do. I'll write a play.

Jer. Hem! Sir, if you please to give me a small certificate of three lines only, to certify those whom it may concern that the bearer hereof, Jeremy Fetch, by name, has for the space of seven years truly and faithfully served Valentine Legend, Esq., and that he is not now turned away for any misdemeanor, but does voluntarily dismiss his master from any further authority over him.

Val. No, sirrah, you shall live with me still.

Jer. Sir, it's impossible. I may die with you, starve with you, or be damned with your works, but to live even three days the life of a play, I no more expect it than to be canonized for a muse after my death.

Val. You are witty, you rogue! I shall want your help. I'll have you learn to make couplets to tag the ends of acts.

Jer. Oh, sir, you're undone, you're ruined; you won't have a friend in the world if you turn poet. Oh, confound that Will's Coffee-house. It has ruined more young men than the Royal Oak Lottery; nothing thrives that goes to it.

[*Enter Mr. Scandal.*]

Scan. What, Jeremy holding forth?

Val. The rogue has been declaiming against wit.

Scan. Ay? Why, then, I'm afraid Jeremy has wit, for wherever it is, it is always contriving its own mire.

Jer. Why, so I've been telling my master, sir. Mr. Scandal, for heaven's sake, try if you can to dissuade him from turning poet.

Scan. Poet! He shall turn soldier first, and rather depend upon the outside of his head than the lining. What! has not your parents made you enemies enough, but you must needs show your wit to get more?

Val. I would rail in my writings and be revenged.

Scan. Rail—at whom?—the whole world? Impotent and vain! Who would die a martyr to sense, in a country where religion is folly? You may stand at bay for a time, but when the full cry is against you, you shan't have fair play for your life. No, turn flatterer, quack, lawyer, parson, anything but poet — without you could retrieve the ancient honors of the name, recall the stage of Athens, and be allowed the force of open, honest satire.

Sir John Vanbrugh was an architect as well as a playwriter, and so his reputation was built on two foundations, for some of his buildings are almost as famous as his plays. His comedies have many of the merits

Born 1666.
Died 1726.

of Congreve's; the situations in the dramas are even more full of fun, although his style is less refined. In this he more resembles Farquhar, who came a little later than either.

Born 1678.
Died 1708.

Farquahar was an actor, who like the Elizabethan dramatists, wisely took to writing plays. Hazlitt says of this trio, "we should have courted Congreve's acquaintance most for his wit and the elegance of his manners; Vanbrugh's, for his power of farcical description, and telling a story; Farquhar's, for the pleasure of his society and the love of good fellowship."

These old comedies held up so clear a mirror to the vices of their time that they are now unfit to read. Had the times been more decent and refined comedy would have reflected this refinement. But as manners improved, wit declined, and we have not had so witty and brilliant comedies in English literature as those of the time of these three writers.

TALK XLII.

A Group of Eighteenth Century Poets; Young, Thompson and Shenstone.

I cannot promise that you will find the poets who follow Pope through the eighteenth century very interesting; they continue on in a path of dead-level merit, from which they rarely diverge to produce anything that deeply touches the heart or the imagination. For my own part I much prefer the untamed originality of the earlier poets. There is a charm in their freedom and naturalness which is never failing. The constant see-saw rhymes, almost always in couples, which Pope had made the fashion, when used by poets less gifted than Pope, become so tiresome that I think if I were

obliged to accept them as poetry, I should henceforth read nothing but prose.

I will not dwell long therefore on the poetry of this period, but will run over for you the names of the most noted poets, and their greatest works, from the time of Pope to the last quarter of the century.

Edward Young is best known as the author of *Night Thoughts*, a serious and sombre poem, which was much read by your grandfathers and grandmothers, and is likely to be read very little hereafter. Young seems to have been a worldly man, who wrote very unworldly poetry. He was gay and rather dissipated in youth; entered the church at fifty; was disappointed that he did not attain to a bishopric, and at sixty wrote his *Night Thoughts* to express this dissatisfaction with life and the way it had used him. His verse sounds more like complainings over disappointments than the lofty musings of a mind enriched by long experience.

Born 1681. Died 1765.

Young wrote other poems than this, but they are so far forgotten that he is known only as the author of *The Night Thoughts*. And although this poem will never again be valued as highly as it once was, there are in it many lines which have been so frequently quoted that they have become a part of the language, and there are also occasional passages grand enough to be remembered as long as literature exists. I mean such lines as these :

> "Procastination is the thief of Time."
> "Tired Nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep."
> "Death loves a shining mark."
> "How blessings brighten as they take their flight."

These lines I have quoted are like proverbs, and have become crystalized in our daily speech.

Let me give one short passage to show the style of the Night Thoughts:

> "Self-flattered, unexperienced, high in hope,
> When young, with sanguine cheer and streamers gay,
> We cut our cable, launch into the world,

And fondly dream each wind and star a friend;
All, in some darling enterprise embarked;
But where is he can fathom its extent?
Amid a multitude of artless hands,
Ruin's sure perquisite! her lawful prize!
Some steer aright; but the black blast blows hard,
And puffs them wide of hope; with hearts of proof
Full against wind and tide, some win their way;
And when strong effort has deserved the port,
And tugged it into view, 'tis won; 'tis lost!
Though strong their oar, yet stronger is their fate;
They strike, and while they triumph, they expire.
In stress of weather, most: some sink outright;
O'er them, and o'er their names, the billows close;
To-morrow knows not they were ever born.
Others a short memorial leave behind,
Like a flag floating when the bark's engulfed,
It floats a moment and is seen no more.
One Cæsar lives; a thousand are forgot.
How few beneath auspicious planets borne
With swelling sails, made good the promised port,
With all their wishes freighted, yet e'en these,
Freighted with all their wishes, soon complain;
Free from misfortune, not from nature free,
They still are men, and when is man secure?
As fatal time, as storm! the rush of years
Beats down their strength; their numberless escapes
In ruin end; and, now, their proud success
But plants new terrors on the victim's brow;
What pain to quit the world, just made their own!
Their nest so deeply drowned, and built so high!
Too low they build, who build beneath the stars."

This is a fair specimen of Young's manner and his philosophy. I think we should not greet it as great poetry if it were published for the first time to-day.

Born 1700. Died 1748.

In strong contrast to Young is James Thomson. To read his poetry after the *Night Thoughts* is like coming from thickest gloom to genial sunshine. Thomson's *Seasons*, in four parts, treats of the Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter. They are like a series of pictures of the *year*, each with the color and atmosphere of the

season they describe. In Spring, we see the tender green of budding plants and trees; in Summer, the brightness of blossoms; the Autumn is russet and purple, with ripened grain and fruits; and the Winter is grey, cold and comfortless, with mud, sleet, and bare boughs. No man could have written thus if he had not been an acute observer of Nature, and in close sympathy with her.

He wrote his *Winter* when in college, and it aided him to gain the notice of a rich patron. In those days the patronage of a great man was as necessary to a poet, as a good publisher is in these days. Thomson had the usual ups and downs of a man of talents who was poor; he went abroad as tutor to a rich man's sons; he acted as secretary to a lord; he wrote for the stage, and at length got a pension from Frederic, Prince of Wales (the son of George II), after which he lived in comparative ease.

He spent the last of his life in a pleasant home on the Thames, and died when forty-eight, of a cold and fever, brought on by a row on the river, taken when he was over-heated. He was a popular man, beloved by his friends, among whom was Pope, who had given the *Seasons* encouraging praise, and had added to it a few lines when Thomson sent it to him for a friendly criticism. In his retirement he wrote *The Castle of Indolence*, a poem in Spenser's measure, which has some very fine bits of description, but is rather a close imitation of the older poet. His plays had some success, but have not added much value to literature. *Sophronisba*, his chief tragedy, is remembered by a ridiculous incident on its first performance. In one sentimental line the hero exclaims—

"O Sophronisba, Sophronisba, O!"

As the actor uttered this on the first night, a mischevious person in the gallery groaned, "O Jemmy Thomson, Jemmy Thomson, O!' which threw the audience into a fit of laughter, and spoiled the effect of the scene.

The Seasons is a book which, like Izaak Walton's *Angler*,

I like to read out of doors under the trees, and I advise you to make it your companion some summer's day, and read to the accompaniment of birds and rippling water, as you recline under trees by the bank of running stream.

The *Hymn to the Seasons* gives a sumning up of the longer poem, and we will read the opening lines from this:

"These as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of Thee. Forth in the pleasing Spring,
Thy beauty walks, Thy tenderness and love
Wide flush the fields; the softening air is balm;
Echo the mountains round; the forest smiles,
And every sense and every heart is joy.
Then comes Thy glory in the Summer months,
With light and heat refulgent. Then Thy sun
Shoots full perfection through the swelling year;
And oft thy voice in dreadful thunder speaks;
And oft at morn, deep noon, or falling eve,
By brooks and groves, in hollow whispering gales.
Thy bounty shines in Autum unconfined,
And spreads a common feast for all that lives.
In Winter awful Thou! with clouds and storms
Around Thee thrown, tempest o'er tempest rolled
Majestic darkness! On the whirlwind's wing,
Raising sublime, Thou bids't the world adore,
And humblest nature with Thy northern blast.
Mysterious round, what skill, what force divine,
Deep felt, in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mixed, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined;
Shade unperceived, so softening into shade,
And all so forming an harmonious whole,
That, as they still succeed, they ravish still.
But wandering oft with brute unconsious gaze,
Man marks not Thee; marks not the mighty hand,
That ever busy, wheels the silent spheres,
Works in the secret deep, shoots steaming thence,
The fair profusion that o'er spreads the Spring;
Flings from the sun direct the flaming day;
Feeds every creature; hurls the tempest forth.
And as on earth this grateful change revolves,
With transport touches all the springs of life."

William Shenstone lived the sort of life that the poet Cowley longed for, while he aspired to the life that Cowley despised. You remember that Cowley, who was a courtier, was always picturing the delights of a little estate in the country which he could adorn as he chose, and where he would spend his days in a peaceful quiet. Shenstone had just such a little estate inherited from his father, and spent all his time and fortune embellishing it in the most fanciful style of landscape gardening, till he made it a wonder of walks, mazes, arbors, gardens, and running waters. But although he amused himself with these occupations, he was ambitious for political honors, and a little soured and disappointed that he could never attain to them.

Born 1714.
Died 1763.

He wrote his poetry chiefly, it seems, for his amusement, and not in the hope of any special reward. In his childhood, he had been sent to a village school (called in England a *dame school*) and his most noted poem, *The School-mistress*, written in Spenserian stanza, pictures the dame and her school. Here are a few verses from his description of the School-mistress:

"Her cap, far whiter than the driven snow,
Emblem right meet of decency does yield;
Her apron dyed in grain, as blue, I trow,
As is the hare-bell that adorns the field;
And in her hand for sceptre, she does wield
Tway brichen sprays, with anxious fear entwined,
With dark distrust, and sad repentance filled.
And steadfast hate, and sharp affection joined,
And fury uncontrolled, and chastisement unkind.

"A russet stole was o'er her shoulders thrown;
A russet kirtle fenced the nipping air.
'Twas simple russet, but it was her own;
'Twas her own country bred the flock so fair
'Twas her own labour did the fleece prepare;
And sooth to say, her pupils ranged around,
Through pious awe did term it passing rare;
For they in gaping wonderment abound,
And think, no doubt, she been the greatest wight on ground.

"One ancient hen she took delight to feed,
The plodding pattern of the busy dame,
Which ever and anon, impelled by need,
Into her school begirt with chickens came,
Such favour did her past deportment claim;
And if neglect had lavished on the ground
Fragment of bread, she would collect the same;
For well she knew, and quaintly could expound,
What sin it were to waste the smallest crumb she found.

"Right well she knew each temper to discry,
To thwart the proud and the submissive raise;
Some with vile copper-prize exalt on high,
And some entice with pittance small of praise;
And other some with baleful twig affrays,
Even absent she the reins of power doth hold,
While with quaint arts the giddy crowd she sways.
Forewarned, if little bird their pranks behold,
'Twill whisper in her ear, and all the scene unfold."

This picture of the old dame is very real, but better than *The School-mistress* I like a pastoral by Shenstone, which, although written in a jingling, rather common-place measure has a taste of the old ballad in it, and recalls the fresh days of poetry. This pastoral is in four parts—Ascence, Hope, Solicitude, Disappointment, and is addressed to Phyllis, by the Shepherd Corydon. These are a few stanzas from Part II:

"My banks they are furnished with bees,
Whose murmur invites one to sleep,
My grottos are shaded with trees,
And my hills are white over with sheep;
I seldom have met with a loss,
Such health do my fountains bestow;
My fountains, all bordered with moss
Where the hare-bells and violets grow.

"Not a pine in my grove is there seen,
But with tendrils of woodbine is bound;
Not a beech's more beautiful green
But a sweet briar entwines it around;
Not my fields in the prime of the year,
More charms than my cattle unfold;

Not a brook that is limpid and clear,
  But it glitters with fishes of gold.

"I have found out a gift for my fair,
  I have found where the wood pigeons breed,
But let me that plunder forbear,
  She will say 'twas a barbarous deed.
For he ne'er can be true, she averred,
  Who could rob a poor bird of his young;
And I loved her the more when I heard
  Such tenderness fall from her tongue.

"I have heard her with sweetness unfold,
  How that pity was due to a dove,
That it ever attended the bold,
  And she called it the sister of Love;
But her words such a pleasure convey,
  So much I her accents adore,
Let her speak, and whatever she say,
  Methinks I should love her the more.

"Can a bosom so gentle remain
  Unmoved, when her Corydon sighs?
Will a nymph that is fond of the plain
  These plains and this valley despise?
Dear regions of silence and shade,
  Soft scenes of contentment and ease,
Where I could have pleasingly strayed,
  If aught in her absence could please.

TALK XLIII.

Eighteenth Century Poets — Gray, Collins, Akenside, Beattie.

Near Shenstone in age was Thomas Gray, who has made himself immortal by one poem, and that one of the best in our language—the *Elegy in a Country Churchyard.* He has written several odes, one to *Adversity*, another to *Eton College*, both far above the av-

Born 1716.
Died 1771.

erage in merit. But the *Elegy* overshadows all else he has done, and is dear to all lovers of good poetry. Its merit was recognized, too, from the time it first appeared, which is a little unusual. It nearly always happens that really great works are not known to be great till time has sat in judgment upon them. It takes distance to show men how great they really are.

Gray seems to have been like the youth described in his *Elegy*, contemplative, sad, a man of fastidious tastes, and not quite at home in a rough world. His early life had been clouded by unhappiness; and when childhood, the background of life, is obscured by sadness, the after-life almost takes on a tinge of gloom. The *Elegy* is doubtless a poem that you already know by heart. Not so familiar, perhaps, are two other fine odes of his, *The Bard* and *The Progress of Poetry*. These are, however, much more artificial than the *Elegy*, which owes its power to the fact that it touched so many responsive chords in the human heart. Another little poem, one of his shortest odes, *To Spring*, has something of this same sympathetic quality, and also has those touches descriptive of scenes and sounds in nature, which are such marked beauties of the *Elegy*. For instance, the description of the insect youth upon the wing, while "through the *peopled* air the busy murmur glows," almost equals the lines, "The beetle whirls his drowsy flight, while distant twinklings lull the distant fold," in the *Elegy*. But we will read the *Ode to Spring:*

"Lo! where the rosy-bosomed hours,
  Fair Venus' train, appear,
Disclose the long-expecting flowers,
  And wake the purple year!
The Attic warbler pours her throat,
Responsive to the cuckoo's note,
  The untaught harmony of spring;
While, whispering pleasures as they fly,
Cool zephyrs thro' the clear blue sky,
  Their gathered fragrance fling.

"Where'er the oak's thick branches stretch,
A broader, browner shade,
Where'er the rude and moss-grown beach
O'er-canopies the glade.
Besides some water's rushy brink
With me the Muse shall sit and think
(At ease reclined in rustic state).
How vain the ardor of the crowd,
How low, how little are the proud,
How indigent the great.

"Still is the toiling hand of Care;
The panting herds repose;
Yet hark! how through the peopled air
The busy murmur glows!
The insect youth are on the wing,
Eager to taste the honied spring
And float amid the liquid noon;
Some lightly o'er the current skim,
Some show their gaily-gilded train,
Quick glancing in the sun.

"To Contemplation's sober eye
Such is the race of man;
And they that creep and they that fly
Shall end where they began.
Alike the busy and the gay
But flutter through Life's little day
In fortune's varying colors drest;
Brushed by the hand of rough mischance
Or chilled by age, their airy dance
They leave, in dust to rest.

"Methinks I hear in accents low
The sportive kind reply,
Poor moralist! and what art thou?
A solitary fly!
Thy joys no glittering female meets,
No hive hast thou of hoarded sweets,
No painted plumage to display;
On hasty wings, thy spring is flown,
Thy sun is set, thy Spring is gone,
We frolic, while 'tis May."

William Collins had one of those natures that so often form a poet; he had a head full of fancies, but an organization too delicate to bear the hard uses of the world. While in college he wrote a series of *Oriental Eclogues*, which he laughed at himself in later years, saying they might just as appropriately have been called "Irish Eclogues." After this he wrote and published his *Odes*, which fell dead from the press. The unhappy poet, disregarded and poor, never recovered from this disappointment. He led a gloomy, morbid life for several years, often in debt, and sometimes in dissipation. Samuel Johnson (the great Doctor Johnson) tells us that once when he went to see Collins, a bailiff was lurking outside his lodgings, ready to arrest him for debt. Yet he was a man as profound in learning as he was rich in fancy. Thus the world often uses the men best able to serve it. In the midst of his distress an uncle left him a legacy of two thousand pounds. But it was too late. He showed his bitterness by buying the edition of his *Odes*, which had been published, and putting it into the flames. Not long after he became insane, so that he was obliged to be shut up in a mad house. Death came mercifully when he was thirty-six years old, ten years after he had published his volume of poetry.

Born 1720. Died 1765.

His *Odes* are on divers subjects, *Pity*, *Fear*, *Liberty*, *Simplicity*, etc. The one best known is the *Ode to the Passions*, which is in almost every poetical collection; that which I like best is on *Evening*, and I quote it for you. It is a very delicate and tender poem, like the hues of a soft sunset. In those days of artificial poetry there are few poems that can compare with this for natural grace, and some of the lines, as where he speaks of evening with dewy fingers drawing, "the gradual, dusky veil," remind one of Milton's early poems:

ODE TO EVENING.

"If aught of oaten stop, or pastoral song,
May hope, chaste Eve, to soothe thy modest ear,
Like thy own solemn springs,
Thy springs and dying gales.

"O nymph reserved, while now the bright-haired sun
Sits in your western tent, whose cloudy skirts,
With braid etherial wove,
O'erhang his wavy bed.

"Now air is hushed, save where one weak-eyed bat,
With short, shrill shriek flies by, on leathern wing;
Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,

"As oft he rises midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in ceaseless hum.
Now teach me, maid composed,
To breathe some softened strain,

"Whose numbers, stealing through thy darkening vale,
May not unseemly with its stillness suit,
As musing slow, I hail
Thy genial loved return.

"For when thy folding star, arising shows
His paly circlet at his warning lamp,
The fragrant hours, and elves
Who slept in buds the day,

"And many a nymph who wreathes her brow with sedge,
And sheds the freshening dew, and lovelier still,
The pensive pleasures sweet,
Prepare thy shadowy car.

Then let me rove some wild and heathy scene,
Or find some ruin midst its dreary dells,
Whose walls more awful nod,
By thy religious gleams.

Or if chill blustering winds or driving rain
Prevent my willing feet, be mine the hut
That from the mountain's side,
Views wilds and swelling floods,

And hamlets brown, and dim, discovered spires,
And hears their simple bell, and marks o'er all,
Thy dewy fingers draw
The gradual dusky veil;

"While spring shall pour his showers, as oft he wont,
And bathe thy breathing tresses, meekest Eve,
While summer loves to sport
Beneath thy lingering light;

"While sallow autumn fills thy lap with leaves,
Or Winter, yelling through the troublous air,
Affrights thy shrinking train,
And rudely rends thy robes.

"So long, regardful of thy quiet rule,
Shall fancy, friendship, science, smiling peace,
Thy gentlest influence own,
And love thy favorite name."

The Pleasures of the Imagination, by Dr. Mark Akenside, and *The Minstrel*, by Dr. James Beattie, deserve at least a passing mention. Born 1721. Died 1770.

The Pleasures of the Imagination is a blank verse poem from which we could cull fine passages, although it is stiff and dull to read all through. *The Minstrel*, is in Spenserian measure; its hero, Edwin, a youth full of aspiration and goodness, is tutored by an old hermit who discourses to him on all noble themes. Beattie also wrote that ballad of *The Hermit* whose opening lines are so familiar:

"At the close of the day when the hamlet is still.
And mortals the sweets of forgetfulness prove."

Beattie published his works as the last quarter of the century began. Before we enter upon a period full of events, I wish to go back a space and trace for you the history of the novel in the eighteenth century. Born 1735. Died 1803.

TALK XLIV.

On the Birth of the English Novel—Richardson and Fielding.

The novel, which in the present is the most widely read of any kind of book that issues from the printing press, is really a plant of comparatively recent growth in literature. In my talks thus far, I have been able to show you very few

works of prose fiction. In the sixteenth century, there were occasional long and rather tedious romances, among the best of which are Sidney's Arcadia and Lyly's Euphues. In the sixteenth century we have no great work that can be called a novel, unless we should reckon John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* in the list.

The nearest approach to the prose fiction of the present previous to the middle of the eighteenth century, is found in De Foe's works, which are nearly all biographical relations, like *Robinson Crusoe* and *Capt. Jack.*

I think, therefore, we must date the birth of the modern novel of society, reflecting the life, manners, and conversation of the age, in the middle of the eighteenth century, when Richardson and Fielding began to write.

The pioneer in the novel of sentiment, which has for its subject the various distresses and moving situations in the lives of a pair of lovers, is Samuel Richardson. The first fifty years of his life seem to have been a slow preparation for the work which filled his later years. He was a delicate and rather shy boy, who sought the society of women and girls rather than boys of his own age.

Born 1689.
Died 1764.

He showed early an ability for letter-writing, and when a boy was largely employed by the young women of his acquaintance in writing their love-letters. In this way, no doubt, the style afterwards used in his novels—all of which are written in the form of letters—was first formed. But notwithstanding his early experience with the pen, Richardson was not drawn from the ordinary pursuits of life by it. He was bred a printer, learned his trade thoroughly, and when he had served a seven years' apprenticeship he married his master's daughter and went into business for himself, in the good old orthodox style of doing things. He was over fifty years old, in easy circumstances, living in a snug little villa, the fruits of his honest labors, when he began to write his first novel. He says that two publishers, business friends, whom he had often furnished with prefaces

and other garnishes to the works he printed for them, asked him why he did not write some letters in the form of a novel, illustrating scenes in real life. They probably saw his talent in that direction, and thought that by means of it they might turn an honest penny for themselves and him. He took their advice, and his first famous novel, *Pamela*, was the result.

Were we to read *Pamela* to-day, knowing nothing of its history, the excitement and delight it caused on its first appearence would be incredible. While he was writing it he began by reading a little to his wife and a young lady visitor, and after that he says, they came every night to his study, saying, "Have you any more of *Pamela*, Mr. Richardson? We have come to have a little more of *Pamela*."

On its publication the story took every woman's heart by storm; nor was the admiration of the book confined to women only, it was read by men of the world as well as by scholars and critics. It created a sensation almost as great in France as in England, and the greatest thinkers in France, who were laying the foundations of ideas that were soon to appear in the French revolution, left off for a time discussion of graver matters, while they read with delight Samuel Richardson's novels.

It was several years after *Pamela* that *Clarissa Harlowe* appeared. This was his greatest success, and carried him to a height of fame that might have turned a stronger head than his. In both novels the plot had the same main-spring. Each heroine is subjected to the persecutions of an unprincipled lover, through whose baseness she suffers all kinds of trials; in the end the servant-maid, Pamela, turns her suitor into a good husband, by force of her beauty and virtues, while the gifted Clarissa sinks under the wrongs she suffers from the depraved Lovelace, and after calmly arranging her funeral, even to the fitting up of her coffin, she passes away amid the lamentations of friends and relatives.

Richardson has been specially praised because he drew *his characters from life*, and brought fiction from the regions

of vague romance into the ordinary walks of human life. This is one of his merits, although in endeavoring to be realistic he is sometimes ludicrous. When Lovelace goes to see Clarissa, he writes to Belford the following account of her dress, for which we ought to be obliged to him, since it gives us a picture of a well-dressed woman in the year 1750; but it seems a little out of place from a man who is in a delirium of joy at meeting his beloved:

"Thou shall judge of her dress. I am a critic, thou know'st in women's dresses. There is such a native elegance in this lady that her person adorns what she wears, more than dress can adorn her. Her head-dress was Brussels lace, peculiarly adapted to the charming turn of her features; a sky-blue ribbon illustrated that. Her morning gown was a pale primrose colored paduasoy,* the cuffs and robings curiously embroidered in a pattern of roses and leaves; a pair of diamond snaps in her ears. Her ruffles were the same as her mob,† her apron, flowered lawn, her petticoat, white satin, quilted, her shoes, blue satin, braided with blue, without lace—for what need has the prettiest foot in the world for ornament? Neat buckles on them, and on her charming arms a pair of velvet glove-like muffs or mittens."

But it is his description of Clarissa's preparations for her death, and all the circumstances attending it, that Richardson's genius rises to its full height. All preparations for the burial are described with the minuteness of a fashionable auctioneer's catalogue. Belford, the friend of Lovelace, writes thus to him after a visit to Clarissa, who is sinking rapidly into a decline:

"She had slept better than I, although her solemn repository (her coffin, which Clarissa ordered some time before death) was under her window not far from her bedside. I was prevailed on to go up and look at the devices. Mrs. Lovick has since shown me a copy of the the draught by which all was ordered. And I will give thee a sketch of the symbols.

"The principal device, neatly etched, on a plate of white metal, is a

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*Paduasoy—*a silk, originally made in Padua.*

† Mob—*was a cap or head-dress.*

crowned serpent with its tail in its mouth, forming a circle, the emblem of eternity, and in the circle made by it is this inscription:

CLARISSA HARLOWE,
April X,
(Then the year)
Ætat. XIX.

"For ornaments: at top an hour-glass, winged; at bottom, an urn. Under the hour-glass, on another plate, this inscription:

Here the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.
JOB 3—17.

Over the urn, near the bottom:

Turn again unto thy rest, O my soul! For the Lord hath regarded thee, and why? *Thou hast delivered my soul from death; mine eyes from tears; and my feet from falling.* PS. CXVI, 7, 8.

Over this text is the head of a white lily, snapped off short, and just falling from the stalk; and this inscription over that, between the principal plate and the lily:

"The days of man are but as grass. For he flourisheth as a flower of the field; for as soon as the wind passeth over it, it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more."—Ps. ciii, 15, 16.

She excused herself to the women on the score of her youth, and being used to draw for needle-work, for having shown more fancy than would perhaps be thought suitable on so solemn an occasion. The date, April 10th, she accounted for, as not being able to tell what her final day would be, and as that was the fatal day of her leaving her father's house. * * * The burial dress was brought home with it (the coffin). The women had curiosity enough I suppose to see her open that. And, perhaps thou wouldst have been glad to have been present to have admired it too."

If Clarissa had been a female undertaker, she could not more admirably have arranged for her death and burial. Yet all this, which seems to the modern reader overstrained sentimentality, sent the readers of that age weeping to their beds.

It is said that so many young women of the time fell in love with Lovelace, in spite of his vices, that Richardson felt as if he must write a novel which should contain an antidote to the dangerous fascinations of the hero of *Clarissa.* He accordingly constructed Sir Charles Grandison, who was

rich, well-born, well-bred, and a walking encyclopedia of all the virtues. You remember the hero in the fairy tale, whose gifts from eleven good fairies are at last made null and void by the curse of one evil fairy. This evil fairy came in at Sir Charles Grandison's baptism to endow him with insupportable priggishness, so that in spite of his virtues one can hardly endure him through the seven volumes that make this formidable story, which I fancy, very few readers of modern novels will ever read through. Walter Scott tells a story of an old lady of advanced age who preferred to have Sir Charles Grandison read aloud to her above all other books, "Because," she said, "should I fall asleep in the course of the reading, I am sure I shall have lost none of it, but shall find the characters where I left them, talking together in the cedar parlor."

Born 1707. Died 1754. Henry Fielding, the greatest novelist of the group, owed his first success to a desire to satirize Richardson. His first novel, *Joseph Andrews*, was written to ridicule Richardson's *Pamela*, but it was so interesting and witty, that readers forgot it was intended for a burlesque, and read the story for its own sake.

Fielding is as hearty and vigorous as Richardson is sentimental. The two authors evidently did not like each other and the reason was grounded in nature, and not in any rivalry as authors. Fielding's novels are the first novels in literature, at once powerful, dramatic, and realistic. Yet it is difficult for any one bred in an age more refined, and especially for a woman, to appreciate heartily a story which depicts characters so without moral sense, or scenes so repulsive as are found in *Tom Jones*, Fielding's greatest novel. It hardly lessens our distaste to know that it is true to the life of the eighteenth century, when you like so little the kind of life it depicts. Yet the overflowing humor, the keen insight into human nature, the fresh, wholesome style, have kept the novels of Fielding at the very top of English fiction. And the debt our modern novelists, Thackeray,

Dickens and many of lesser note owe to him, is never to be reckoned. I cannot do better justice to Fielding than by quoting a paragraph from what Thackeray says of him: *

"What a genius! what a vigor! what a bright-eyed intelligence and observation! what a wholesome hatred for meanness and knavery! what a vast sympathy! what a cheerfulness! what a manly relish of life! what a love of human kind! what a POET is here! watching, meditating, brooding, creating! what multitudes of truths has that man left behind him! what generations he has taught to laugh wisely and fairly! what scholars he has formed and accustomed to the exercise of thoughtful humor and the manly play of wit! what a courage he had! what a dauntless and constant cheerfulness of intellect, that burned bright and steady through all the storms of his life and never deserted its last wreck. It is wonderful to think of the pains and misery that man suffered; the pressure of want, illness, remorse, which he endured, and that the writer was neither malignant nor melancholy, his view of truth never warped, and his generous human kindness never surrendered."

On such a tribute, from such a man, I think we may fairly let Fielding's merits rest.

TALK XLV.

THE NOVELISTS SMOLLETT AND STERNE.

TOBIAS SMOLLETT is another of the great novelists of the period. *Roderick Random*, *Peregrine Pickle*, and *Humphrey Clinker*, are the titles of his most famous fictions. But his pages are disfigured by the same coarseness that repels us in Fielding, and he has not nearly as much genius. Thackeray, whose opinion of Fielding we have just quoted, says he thinks *Humphrey Clinker* the most laughable story ever written since the goodly art of novel-writing began. And Dickens has borne testimony to his power, in his own novel of *David Copper-*

Born 1721. Died 1771.

* *Lectures on the English Humorists.*

field, where he relates how David kept Steerforth and the other boys awake in the dormitory while he narrated the adventures of Roderick, or Peregrine, or Humphrey.

Lawrence Sterne, author of *Tristram Shandy*, was only second to Richardson in sentimentality, and to Fielding in wit. He has the same faults of grossness that we complain of in the others, and he is on the whole, less wholesome than any of them. But some of the characters in *Tristram Shandy* will live always in literature, particularly that of good Uncle Toby, who is one of the most delightful characters in fiction. You all have heard of Uncle Toby; his goodness to Le Fevre; his embarrassments with the widow Wadman; his humane little speech when he takes out the fly from the milk jug and sets it to dry in the sun. "There is room enough in the world for thee and for me." All these characteristics make him an immortal figure in literature, one to set beside Addison's Sir Roger de Coverly,* or our own dear Mr. Pickwick.†

Born 1713. Died 1768.

The *Sentinental Journey* is the record of a tour which Sterne made on the continent, and here is an extract from it, which is a good illustration of Sterne's style. He has been to visit the Bastile‡ and is seized with these reflections:

"As for the Bastile, said I to myself, the terror is in the word. Make the most of it you can, the Bastile is but another word for a tower, and a tower is but another word for a house you can't get out of. Mercy on gouty people, they are in it twice a year; but with nine livres a day, and pen and ink, and paper, and patience albeit a man can't get out, he may do very well within, at least for a month or six weeks; at the end of which, if he is a harmless fellow, his innocence appears, and he comes out a better and wiser man than when he went in. I had some occasion (I forget what) to step into the court-yard as I settled this account; and remember I walked down stairs in no small triumph with the conceit of my reasoning. 'Beshrew the sombre pencil,' said I, vauntingly, 'for I envy not its powers

*In the *Spectator*.

†*Dickens' Pickwick Papers*.

‡ Bastile was a famous French prison, torn down by the populace in the French Revolution.

which paints the evils of life with so hard and deadly a coloring. The mind sits terrified at the objects she has herself magnified and blackened; reduce them to the proper size and hue, and she overlooks them. 'Tis true,' I said, correcting the proposition, 'the Bastile' is not an evil to be despised, but strip it of its towers, fill up the fosse, unbarricade the doors, call it simply a confined place, and suppose this same tyrant of a distemper, and not of a man, which holds you in it, half the evil vanishes, and you bear the other half without complaint.' I was interrupted in the heyday of this soliloquy with a voice which I took to be that of a child, which complained it could not get out. I looked up and down the passage, and seeing neither man, woman nor child, I went out without further attention. In my return back through the passage, I heard the same words repeated twice over, and, looking up, I saw it was a starling hung in a little cage. 'I can't get out; I can't get out,' said the starling. I stood looking at the bird, and to every person who came through the passage it was fluttering to the side towards which they approached it, with the same lamentation of its captivity.

'*I can't get out*,' said the starling. 'God help thee,' said I, "but I'll let thee out, cost what it will;' so I turned about the cage to get the door. It was twisted and double-twisted so fast with wire that there was no getting it open without pulling the cage to pieces. I took both hands to it. The bird flew to the place where I was attempting its deliverance, and thrusting his head through the trellis, pressed his breast against it as if impatient. 'I fear, poor creature,' said I, 'I cannot set thee at liberty.' 'I can't get out; I can't get out,' said the starling. I vow, I never had my affections more tenderly awakened, nor do I remember an incident in my life where the dissipated spirits to which my reason had been a bubble, were so suddenly called home. Mechanical as the notes were, yet so true in tune to nature were they chanted, that in one moment they overthrew all my systematic reasonings upon the Bastile; and I walked heavily up stairs, unsaying every word I had said going down there.

"Disguise thyself as thou wilt, still, Slavery,' said I, 'thou art a bitter draught; and though thousands in all ages have been made to drink of thee, thou art no less bitter on that account. 'Tis *thou*, thrice sweet and gracious goddess,' addressing myself to Liberty, 'whom all, in public or private, worship, whose taste is grateful, and ever will be so till nature herself shall change; no tint of words can spot thy snowy mantle, or chemic power turn thy sceptre into iron; with thee to smile upon him as he eats his crust, the swain is happier than the monarch, from whose court thou art exiled. 'Gra-

cious heaven!' cried I, kneeling down on the last step but one in my ascent, 'grant me but this fair goddess as my companion and shower down thy mitres, if it seem good unto thy divine providence, upon those heads that are aching for thee.

"The bird in his cage pursued me into my room. I sat down close to my table, and leaning my head upon my hand, I began to figure to myself the miseries of imprisonment. I was in a right frame for it, and so I gave full scope to my imagination; I was going to begin with the millions of my fellow-creatures born to the inheritance of slavery; but finding however affecting that picture was, that I could not bring it near me, and that the multitude of sad groups in it did but distract me, I took a single captive, and having first shut him up in his dungeon, I then looked through the twilight of his grated door to take his picture. I beheld his body half wasted away with long expectation and confinement, and felt what kind of sickness of the heart it was that arises from hope deferred. Upon looking nearer I saw him pale and feverish; in thirty years the western breeze had not once fanned his blood; he had seen no sun, no moon, in all that time, nor had the voice of friend or kinsman breathed through his lattice; his children—but here my heart began to bleed, and I was forced to go on with another part of the portrait. He was sitting upon the ground upon a little straw in the furthest corner of his dungeon, which was alternately his chair and his bed; a little calendar of small sticks lay at the head, notched all over with the dismal nights and days he had passed there; he had one of these little sticks in his hand, and with a rusty nail he was etching another day of misery to add to the heap. As I darkened the little light he had, he lifted up a hopeless eye toward the door, then cast it down, shook his head, and went on with his work of affliction. I heard his chains upon his legs as he turned his body to lay his little stick upon the bundle. He gave a deep sigh; I saw the iron enter into his soul. I burst into tears. I could not sustain the picture of imprisonment which my fancy had drawn."

It seems a pity to end by saying that the man who could *write* thus feelingly seems to have had very little real feeling in his nature, and that by all accounts he was selfish and cold-hearted.

TALK XLVI.

On Dr. Samuel Johnson.

In several of the notable periods in literature, you will find some one man who by force of his genius or his character, exercises a sort of royal rule over his fellows. In the Elizabethan age Ben Jonson held such a sway over his literary circle, partly because he had real talents, and partly because his good opinion of himself was so strong that he was able to impress it upon other men. In the last quarter of the seventeenth century, Dryden exercised an almost unlimited power. Sitting in his chair at Will's Coffee-house, he appears as much of an autocrat as if he were a crowned king of letters. Something of the same sway over men and affairs Dean Swift held in the Augustan age. But none of these wielded a power so absolute or of so long duration as Samuel Johnson, who for many years of his life, and long after his death, was a sort of despot, from whom there was no appeal.

Of all the men of the past whose acquaintance we make through books, I do not remember one whom we know so much about, or can see so vividly, as Dr. Samuel Johnson. Our thanks for this are due to the man who wrote his life, James Boswell, a Scotchman, familiarly called "Bozzy," who for years was happy to stand in the background of Johnson's greatness, looking at him with reverent admiration, eagerly waiting upon every word that fell from his lips, that he might treasure it up to send down to posterity. Nothing was too trivial for Boswell; if Dr. Johnson sneezed, down went the fact in Boswell's note-book. The result is, that of all biographies,

Born 1709.
Died 1784.

Boswell's Life of Johnson is the most minute and the most entertaining ever written, and although we laugh at the author, we shall be always grateful to him.

It was the strong and sterling forces of character that got Dr. Johnson his footing in the world. He had neither good looks, elegant manners, fine tact, nor any personal graces, to help him. Lacking all these, he yet rose from obscurity to a very high place in his day and generation.

He was born in the little town of Lichfield, and was twenty-eight years old when he started for London to begin there his literary career. David Garrick, afterwards the great actor, who had been Johnson's school-fellow and later his pupil, was his companion in this journey. Johnson's capital in trade was his tragedy of *Irene*, which he carried in his pocket, while Garrick had little more than a gay heart and his dramatic genius to start with. The tragedy of *Irene* never made a success even with Garrick's genius to uphold it, but Johnson climbed steadily to power.

His early days in London are pathetic to read about. He was very poor, sometimes so poor that he walked the streets at night because he had no money to pay his lodging. His clothes were often so shabby that he could not appear in respectable society. After he had written some articles which attracted notice, in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the publisher, Mr. Cave, invited him to dinner to meet some friends who were anxious to see a man who could write with such power. Johnson came to the dinner, but his clothes were so poor that he dined behind a screen out of sight of the guests. But nothing could crush him, although once in after life, when he was prosperous and honored, in recalling the miseries of a poor author, he burst into tears at the sharp remembrance of them. Bye and bye his articles, which he wrote for newspapers and magazines, began to attract attention. Pope praised him; Richardson, the printer (who afterwards wrote *Clarissa Harlowe*), admired him; the publisher began to inquire him out; and soon his lot grew easier.

His first notable work was a *Dictionary of the English Language*, which his publisher engaged him to make, agreeing to pay him fifteen hundred and seventy-five pounds for the work, paid in installments, a guinea at a time, as he furnished the copy. He agreed to complete the work in three years, but although begun in 1747, it was not published till 1755. But in the meantime he did other work. It occurred to him in his intervals of compiling the dictionary to edit a paper on the plan of Addison and Steele inthe*Spectator*, and thus he began the *Rambler*, writing a series of two hundred papers by that name. Of all his works none was so popular as this. Goldsmith gives the general opinion about it in one of his essays called *The Fame Machine*, in which he represents a small carriage as taking passengers to the Temple of Fame. As Goldsmith is talking to the coachman, he says:

"A grave personage appeared, whom at some distance I took for one of the most reserved and even disagreeable persons I had ever seen, but as he approached, his appearance improved, and when I could distinguish him thoroughly, I perceived that in spite of the severity of his frown, he had one of the most good-natured countenances that could be imagined. Upon coming to open the stage-door, he lifted a parcel of folios into the seat before him, but our inquisitive coachman at once shoved them out again. "What, not take in my Dictionary?" exclaimed the other, in a rage. "Be patient, sir," replied the coachman, "I have drove a coach, man and boy, these two thousand years, but I do not remember to have carried but one dictionary during that time. That little work peeping out of your pocket, may I presume to ask what it contains?" "A mere trifle," replied the author, "it is called the *Rambler*." "The Rambler!" cries the coachman, "I beg, sir, you'll take your place. I have heard our ladies in the court of Apollo, mention it with rapture, and Clio, who happens to be a little grave, prefers it to the Spectator, though others have observed that the reflections, by being refined, becomes sometimes minute."

Besides the works which I have mentioned, he wrote a series of *Lives of the Poets*, which were written as prefaces to an edition of the works of the English Poets. These

were so much esteemed as criticism, that they took their place in literature as critical biographies, independent of the work for which they were written. They included the lives of Milton, Parnell, Waller, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Gray, and many others. He also edited Shakspeare, with criticism on the plays. Of the poets of his own time, and of the school which he had been educated to believe was the correct school in poetry, he could write with excellent judgment; but Milton, Shakspeare, the poets of the Elizabethan ages, were too great for him, and the present age does not accept his criticism of them.

His story of *Rasselas*, a little work which has taken a place among English classics, is the most readable of all his works. It is the account of an eastern prince who is reared in a happy valley, and guarded from all knowledge of evil, but finally grows weary of the monotony of his life and wanders through the world in the vain search after happiness. It was written, so Johnson said, to pay the funeral expenses of his mother and some little debts she left at death, and the author got for it one hundred and twenty-five pounds.

The Johnsonian style is in pompous and long-syllabled words, many of them words of Latin origin. He underrated the value of strong, homely English, and when he had expressed himself in plain, direct words, he was apt to translate himself into a more verbose style. Boswell gives some good instances—as once when he said vigorously—speaking of one of the comedies of the time of Charles II: "It had not wit enough to keep itself sweet," and immediately changed this to "it had not enough vitality to preserve it from putrefaction." Macaulay finds a still better instance from one of his familiar letters, when he was traveling in the Hebrides. He writes, "when we were taken up stairs, a dirty fellow bounced out of the bed in which we were to lie." Afterwards when he printed the journal of these travels, he gave the account thus: "Out of one of the beds in which we were to repose, started up at our entrance, a man, black as Cyclops

from the forge." This is what Macaulay wittily calls "putting a sentence out of English into Johnsonese."

In person Johnson was awkward, stooping, with shambling gait, head rolling from side to side, and face disfigured with marks of scrofula. In manners he must have been very disagreeable, as he was often rude to excess, intolerant and over-bearing in conversation, and regardless of the feelings of others. He was extremely narrow-minded in some of his views; a Tory who could hardly bear the name of Whig; an Englishman who hated all foreigners, and declared the Americans at the outbreak of their revolution, "a party of convicts who ought to be hanged;" a churchman who had no mercy for dissenters; and a partisan in most of his literary opinions. Yet, with so much to be disliked, he was a generous man, whose house was filled with poor people who lived on his bounty; he was very tender to distress, and was a truthful, honest, independent man.

Johnson was the center of the *Literary Club* started in his day, which had Goldsmith, Edmund Burke, Joshua Reynolds the artist, David Garrick, and other famous men, among its members. This club was one of his haunts, and another was the house of Mr. Thrale, a wealthy gentleman who befriended him, where he took tea once a week, till for a time he took up his abode in the house altogether. Mrs. Thrale, who was a lively, sweet-tempered woman, made much of him, and poured his tea cheerfully; not a light office, for he drank a dozen cups at a sitting, and once took twenty-five at one tea-drinking, to the disgust and horror of his hostess.

Johnson did more than any other one man in English letters to make literature a working profession—to take it out of the hands of patrons, and make the dealings of author and publisher a substantial business relation. He was one of the first English authors who lived by his work, and the honest independence with which he inspired the profession, has been a help to authors ever since his time.

His dictionary, too, was one of the great works of the century. While we can not help wishing that the *Johnsonian* tendency in language had been towards greater simplicity and not towards the introduction of so many Latin words, still we must see that he did a great work for language. In his time there was no standard dictionary—the best one very imperfect—and Johnson in arranging and defining the words of the language, brought it into order and gave it form. He singly and alone attempted to do for England what the French Academy did for France, and although it is a question whether it is not better to have so important a work done by a body of scholars rather than by one man alone, yet nobody in raising that question, will doubt the value and honesty of Samuel Johnson's labors.

TALK XLVII.

On Oliver Goldsmith and "The Vicar of Wakefield."

The name of Oliver Goldsmith is often heard in connection with that of Dr. Johnson, and the two men were excellent friends, although Johnson was twenty years older than Goldsmith, and, in a kindly way, disposed to patronize his young friend.

Born 1728.
Died 1774.

Goldsmith's early life was a chequered one. After leaving college he made an attempt to enter life at most of its principal gates. He tried teaching, the law, the church, medicine, until, throwing up all the professions, he started on a vagabond tour through Europe, from which he returned to London, poor, alone, unfriended, and with no settled calling in life. He began his literary career by writing for a magazine, the drudge of a publisher who worked him hard and paid him little. But in this work Goldsmith first discovered what he was capable of doing, and this was the first step in the ladder he climbed so rapidly.

1756.

His literary life lasted about fifteen years, and in this time he produced poetry, history, biography, works on natural science, essays, novels, and comedies, with wonderful versatility, and with success in almost every style. With work or without it, he was always in debt, for he was reckless and improvident to excess, and never could resist the passion for gambling, which in early youth was nearly his ruin.

His first success was in essay writing. He published the *Bee*, which in lightness and vivacity was in strong contrast to the dignity and weight of Johnson's *Rambler*. If Johnson and Goldsmith had united their powers, as Addison and Steel had done forty years earlier, they would have made a paper almost, if not quite, as good as the *Spectator*.

After the *Bee*, Goldsmith contributed to a newspaper *The Letters of a Chinese Philosopher*, professedly written by a Chinese gentleman traveling in England, who notes all that impresses him as odd in government, society, and morals, and compares them favorably or unfavorably, with Eastern customs. You can fancy what an opportunity Goldsmith found in the person of the Chinese gentleman for good-natured satire against whatever in politics or manners deserved it.

His first fame was won by his poem, *The Traveller*, in which he put the impressions and memories of his tour in Europe into verse. This brought him reputation among literary men, and the praise with which it was received encouraged the publishers to bring out the *Vicar of Wakefield*, which had been some time in their hands. This story is of all his works, the one which brings him closest to his readers of the present. I have never seen any one, young or old, who did not read it with delight, and I believe it will continue to be read as long as the eighteenth century is remembered in literature. Dr. Johnson gives this account of how the *Vicar* came to be published:

"I received one morning a message from poor Goldsmith, that he was in great distress, and as it was not in his power to come to me,

begging that I would come to him as soon as possible. I sent him a guinea, and promised to come to him directly; I accordingly went as soon as I was dressed, and found that his landlady had arrested him for his rent, at which he was in a violent passion. I perceived that he had already changed my guinea, and had got a bottle of madeira and a glass before him; I put the cork into the bottle, desired he would be calm, and began to talk to him of the means by which he could be extricated. He then told me he had a novel ready for the press, which he produced to me. I looked into it, and saw its merit; told the landlady I would soon return; and having gone to a book-seller, sold it for sixty pounds. I brought Goldsmith the money, and he discharged his rent, not without rating the landlady in a high tone for having used him so ill."

Goldsmith's *Vicar of Wakefield* appeared after Richardson, Fielding, and Smollett, had gained their fame as novelists, and was the purest and most wholesome of English stories yet written. The scenes of Fielding and Smollett are too frequently vicious, or are carried on in the haunts of vice.

Goldsmith took his reader into a rural English life, among characters who at once get a hold on our hearts, which they never lose. We learn to love them all, from artless Dr. Primrose to the pedantic, yet easily humbugged, Moses. We enjoy all the amusements of the family, when they are living in competency, their tea-drinkings, out-door dances, their social commerce with neighbors, as if we were taking part in them; and their revulsion from a comfortable estate to poverty, we feel as if it were our own. How delightfully Mr. Burchell, the lord in disguise, comes into the story. We guess, long before the artless Primroses do, that he is to be their benefactor. And when the bad young squire comes upon the scene, I tremble for Olivia's peace of mind, even when I read the novel for the twentieth time.

How wise good Dr. Primrose is in all his little discourses although we see that he is, in all minor matters, led by his wife and daughters, very tenderly by the nose. Yet he sometimes gets the better of them. One day, he says:

"My wife was busy making the venison pasty, Moses sat reading, while I taught the little ones. My daughters seemed equally busy

with the rest, and I observed them for a good while cooking something over the fire. I at first supposed they were assisting their mother, but little Dick informed me, in a whisper, they were making a wash for the face. Washes of all kinds I had a natural antipathy to, for I knew that instead of mending the complexion they spoiled it. I therefore approached my chair by slow degrees to the fire, and grasping the poker, as if the fire wanted mending, seemingly by accident overturned the whole composition, and it was then too late to begin another."

One of the most delicious bits of humor in the book, is the good old doctor's account of the way in which the family had their portraits painted.

"My wife and daughters happening to return a visit to neighbor Flamborough's, found that the family had lately gotten their pictures drawn by a limner,* who traveled the country and took likenesses for *fifteen shillings a head.* As this family and ours had long been at rivalry in point of taste, our spirits took the alarm at this stolen march upon us, and notwithstanding all I could say (and I said much), it was resolved we should have our pictures done too. Having therefore engaged the limner (for what could I do), my next deliberation was to show the superiority of our taste in the attitudes. As for our neighbor's family, there were seven of them, and they were drawn with seven oranges, a thing quite out of taste, no variety in life, no composition in the world. We desired to have something in a brighter style, and, after many debates, at length came to the unanimous resolution of being painted in one large historical family piece. This would be cheaper, since one frame would serve for all, and it would be infinitely more genteel, for all families of any taste were now drawn in this manner. As we did not immediately recollect any historical subject to hit us, we were contented with being drawn as separate historical figures. My wife desired to be drawn as Venus, and the painter was requested not to be too frugal of the diamonds in her stomacher and hair. Her two little ones were to be Cupids by her side; while I, in my gown and band, was to present her with my books on the Whistonian Controversy. Olivia would be drawn as an Amazon, sitting on a bank of flowers, dressed in a green Joseph richly laced with gold, and a whip in her hand; Sophia was to be a shepherdess, with as many sheep as the painter would put in for nothing, and Moses was to be dressed out with a white hat and feather.

* A Painter.

* * The painter set to work, and wrought with such assiduity that in less than four days the whole was completed. The piece was large, and it must be owned he did not spare his colors, for which my wife gave him great encomiums. We were all perfectly satisfied with his performance, but an unfortunate circumstance which had not occurred till the picture was finished, now struck us with dismay. It was so large we had no place in the house to fix it! The picture, therefore, instead of gratifying our vanity, as we hoped it would, leaned in the most mortifying manner against the kitchen wall, where the canvass was stretched and painted, much too large to be got through any of the doors, and the jest of all our neighbors."

Goldsmith's poem, *The Deserted Village*, breathes something of the same spirit as The Vicar of Wakefield. It shows the same sympathy with the simple life of rural England; and the character of the village preacher, who reminds us of Dr. Primrose, is said to be a genuine portrait of the poet's father:

"Near yonder copse, where once the garden smiled,
And still where many a garden flower grows wild,
There, where a few torn shrubs the place disclose,
The village preacher's modest mansion rose.
A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich, with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns, he ran his godly race,
Nor e'er had changed, or wished to change, his place;
Unskillful he to fawn, or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More bent to raise the wretched, than to rise.
His house was known to all the vagrant train;
He chid their wanderings, but relieved their pain.
The long-remembered beggar was his guest,
Whose beard descending swept his aged breast;
The ruined spend-thrift was no longer proud,
Claimed kindred there, and had his claims allowed;
The broken soldier kindly bade to stay,
Sat by his fire and talked the night away;
Wept o'er his wounds, or tales of sorrow done,
Shouldered his crutch, and showed how fields were won.
Pleased with his guest, the good man learned to glow,
And quite forgot their vices in their woe,

Careless their merits or their faults to scan
His pity gave ere charity began.

"Thus to relieve the wretched was his pride,
And even his failings leaned to virtue's side;
But, in his duty prompt at every call,
He watched and wept, he prayed and felt for all;
And as a bird each fond endearment tries,
To tempt her new-fledged offspring to the skies,
He tried each art, reproved each dull delay,
Allured to brighter worlds, and led the way
Beside the bed where parting life was laid;
And sorrow, guilt, and pain, by turns displayed,
The reverend champion stood. At his control
Despair and anguish fled the struggling soul;
Comfort came down, the trembling wretch to raise,
And his last faltering accent whispered praise.

"At church, with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway.
The fools who came to scoff, remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With ready zeal, each honest rustic ran.
Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile.
His ready smile a parent's warmth expressed;
Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distressed.
To them his heart, his love, his grief were given,
But all his serious thoughts have rest in Heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale, and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its head the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

Probably the *Vicar of Wakefield* and *The Deserted Village* will outlive all else that Goldsmith ever wrote, but neither of these won him such success during his life as his comedies *She Stoops to Conquer*, and *The Good-Natured Man.* Best of these is *She Stoops to Conquer*, which deserved its success. It was a play whose situations were mirthful and innocent; whose characters were laughable without being coarse. The drama had made great im-

provement in purity during the century which begun with Congreve and Farquhar, and the work of Goldsmith, in *She Stoops to Conquer* and *The Good-Natured Man*, followed by Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *Rivals*, and *The School for Scandal*, did more to elevate the stage than many sermons had yet been able to do. And we may count it as one of the chief merits of a writer so versatile as Goldsmith, that his wit was pure and wholesome, his pathos true and not morbid, and that few men have written so little that in the interests of morality we could wish to blot.

1751-1817.

TALK XLVIII.

On the First Woman Novelist.

In the year 1778, the whole reading world was agitated by the appearance of an anonymous novel called *Evelina*. Everybody read it with delight, and it was pronounced a wonderful picture of the times. All London was occupied in guessing what new author had burst into fame, and everybody was praising *him*, and wondering about *him*, when it was whispered from one to another that a young lady, Miss Fanny Burney, had written this book, and Miss Burney at once became the heroine of the hour. Dr. Johnson's friend, Mrs. Thrale, sent and invited her to tea, where the great Doctor sat beside her and paid her extravagant, not to say fulsome, compliments. Edmund Burke, the statesman, sat up all night to read her book. Sir Joshua Reynolds, the painter, declared he would give fifty pounds to know the author, and praises were showered upon her by readers great and little. We who read every year dozens of novels far cleverer than *Evelina* may find it difficult to understand this furor. But we must remember that no English *woman* had ever before written an *English* novel, and that *Evelina* was more natural in style than Richardson, and

Born, 1752. Died, 1840.

much more delicate and refined than Fielding, and then we shall not be surprised at the wonder as well as the delight with which it was welcomed. The young ladies who had been reading *Tom Jones*, or the more delicate pages of *Clarissa Harlowe*, could read *Evelina* without a blush, and the artlessness and innocence of the heroine would win the heart of the severest critic.

Evelina, a girl of sixteen, bred in a country parsonage, is taken to London by some friends, and, all at once, ushered into the gay life of that city, as it was a century ago. Soon after her arrival in London, Evelina goes with her friends, Mrs. Mirvan and her daughter Maria, to a ball, of which she writes next day the following account to her guardian in the country:

We came home from the ridotto so late, or rather so early, that it was not possible for me to write. Indeed we did not *go*—you will be frightened to hear it—till past 11 o'clock; but nobody does. A terrible reverse of the order of nature! We sleep with the sun and wake with the moon.

The room was very magnificent; the lights and decorations were brilliant, and the company gay and splendid. But I should have told you that I made many objections to being of the party, according to the resolution I had formed. However, Maria laughed me out of my scruples, and so once again I went to an assembly.

Mrs. Mirvan was soon engaged; and presently after, a very fashionable, gay-looking man, who seemed about thirty years of age, addressed himself to me, and begged to have the honor of dancing with me. Now Maria's partner was a gentleman of Mrs. Mirvan's acquaintance; for she had told us it was highly improper for young women to dance with strangers at any public assembly. Indeed it was by no means my wish so to do; yet I did not like to confine myself from dancing at all; neither did I dare refuse this gentleman, and then, if an acquaintance should offer, accept him; and so, all these reasons combining, induced me to tell him—yet I blush to write it to you!—that I was *already engaged;* by which I meant to keep myself at liberty to dance or not, as matters should fall out.

I suppose my consciousness betrayed my artifice, for he looked at me as if incredulous; and, instead of being satisfied with my answer, and leaving me, according to my expectation, he walked at my side, and, *with the greatest* ease imaginable, began a conversation in the

free style which only belongs to old and intimate acquaintance. But, what was most provoking, he asked me a thousand questions concerning *the partner to whom I was engaged.* And at last he said, "Is it really possible that a man whom you have honored with your acceptance can fail to be at hand to profit from your goodness?"

I felt extremely foolish, and begged Mrs. Mirvan to lead to a seat; which she very obligingly did. Captain Mirvan (her husband) sat next her; and, to my great surprise, this gentleman thought proper to follow and seat himself next to me.

"What an insensible!" continued he; "why, madam, you are missing the most delightful dance in the world!—the man must be either mad or a fool. Which do you incline to think him yourself?"

"Neither, sir," answered I, in some confusion.

He begged my pardon for the freedom of his supposition, saying, "I really was off my guard, from astonishment that any man can be so much and so unaccountably his own enemy. But where, madam, can he possibly be?—has he left the room? or has he not been in it?"

"Indeed, sir," said I, peevishly, "I know nothing of him."

"I don 't wonder that you are disconcerted, madam; it is really very provoking. The best part of the evening will be absolutely lost. He deserves not that you should wait for him."

"I do not, sir," said I, "and I beg you not to—"

"Mortifying, indeed, madam," interrupted he; "a lady to wait for a gentleman! O, fie! careless fellow! What can detain him? Will you give me leave to seek him?"

"If you please, sir," answered I, quite terrified lest Mrs. Mirvan should attend to him; for she looked very much surprised at seeing me enter into conversation with a stranger.

"With all my heart," cried he; "pray, what coat has he on?"

"Indeed I never looked at it."

"Out upon him!" cried he; "what! did he address you in a coat not worth looking at? What a shabby wretch!"

How ridiculous! I really could not help laughing, which I fear, encouraged him, for he went on—

"Charming creature! and can you really bear ill-usage with so much sweetness? Can you, *like Patience on a monument*, smile in the midst of disappointment? For my part, though I am not the offended person, my indignation is so great that I long to kick the fellow round the room!—unless, indeed," (hesitating and looking earnestly at me), unless, indeed, it is a partner of your own *creating?*"

I was dreadfully abashed, and could not make any answer.

"But no!" cried he again, and with warmth, "it cannot be that

you are so cruel! Softness itself is painted in your eyes. You could not, surely, have the barbarity so wantonly to trifle with my misery."

I turned away from this nonsense with real disgust. Mrs. Mirvan saw my confusion, but was perplexed what to think of it, and I could not explain to her the cause lest the captain should hear me. I therefore proposed to walk; she consented, and we all rose; but, would you believe it? this man had the assurance to rise too, and walk close by my side, as if of my party!

"Now," cried he, "I hope we shall see this ingrate. Is that he," (pointing to an old man who was lame), "or that?" And in this manner he asked me of whoever was old or ugly in the room. I made no sort of answer; and when he found that I was resolutely silent, and walked on as much as I could without observing him, he suddenly stamped his foot, and cried out in a passion, "Fool! idiot! booby!"

I turned hastily towards him: "O, madam," continued he, "forgive my vehemence; but I am distracted to think there should exist a wretch who can slight a blessing for which I would forfeit my life! O that I could but meet him! I would soon—but I grow angry; pardon me, madam; my passions are violent, and your injuries affect me!"

I began to apprehend he was a madman, and stared at him with the utmost astonishment. "I see you are moved, madam," said he; "generous creature!—but don't be alarmed, I am cool again, I am indeed—upon my soul, I am;—I entreat you, most lovely of mortals! I entreat you to be easy."

"Indeed, sir," said I, very seriously, "I must insist upon your leaving me: you are quite a stranger to me, and I am both unused and averse to your language and your manners."

This seemed to have some effect on him. He made me a low bow, begged my pardon, and vowed he would not for the world offend me.

"Then, sir, you must leave me," cried I.

"I am gone, madam, I am gone!" with a most tragical air: and he marched away at a quick pace out of sight in a moment; but before I had time to congratulate myself, he was again at my elbow.

"And could you really let me go, and not be sorry? Can you see me suffer torments inexpressible, and yet retain all your favor for that miscreant who flies you? Ungrateful puppy! I could bastinado him!"

"For Heaven's sake, my dear," cried Mrs. Mirvan, "who is he talking of?"

"Indeed, I do not know, madam," said I; "but I wish he would leave me."

"What's all that there?" cried the captain.

The man made a low bow, and said, "Only, sir, a slight objection which this young lady makes to dancing with me, and which I am endeavoring to obviate. I shall think myself greatly honored if you will intercede for me."

"That lady, sir," said the captain, coldly, "is her own mistress." And he walked sullenly on.

"You, madam," said the man, who looked delighted, to Mrs. Mirvan, "you, I hope, will have the goodness to speak for me."

"Sir," answered she, gravely, "I have not the pleasure of being acquainted with you."

"I hope when you have, ma'am," cried he, undaunted, you will honor me with your approbation; but, while I am yet unknown to you, it would be truly generous in you to countenance me; and I flatter myself, madam, that you will not have cause to repent it."

Mrs. Mirvan, with an embarrassed air, replied, "I do not at all mean, sir, to doubt your being a gentleman—but—"

"But *what*, madam?—that doubt removed, why a *but?*"

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Mirvan (with a good-humored smile), "I will even treat you with your own plainness and try what effect that will have on you; I must therefore tell you, once for all—"

"O pardon me, madam!" interrupted he, eagerly, "you must not proceed with those words *once for all;* no, if *I* have been too *plain*, and, though a *man*, deserve a rebuke, remember, dear ladies, that if you copy, you ought, in justice to excuse me."

We both stared at the man's strange behaviour.

"Be nobler than your foe," continued he, turning to me, "honor me with one dance, and give up the ingrate who has merited so ill your patience."

Mrs. Mirvan looked with astonishment at us both.

"Whom does he speak of, my dear? you never mentioned—"

"Oh madam," exclaimed he, "he was not worth mentioning—it is pity he was ever thought of; but let us forget his existence. One dance is all I solicit. Permit me, madam, the honor of this young lady's hand; it will be a favor I shall ever most gratefully acknowledge."

"Sir," answered she, "favors and strangers have with me no connection."

"If you have hitherto confined your benevolence to your friends," said he, "suffer me to be the first for whom your charity is enlarged."

"Well, sir, I know not what to say—but—"

He stopped her *but* with so many urgent entreaties that she at last told me I must go down one dance or avoid his importunities by *returning* home. I hesitated which alternative to choose; but this

impetuous man at last prevailed, and I was obliged to consent to dance with him.

And thus my deviation from truth was punished, and thus did the man's determined boldness conquer."

Into such scrapes as these do Evelina's inexperience and thoughtlessness constantly lead her, and the case is made still worse, by the fact that her vulgar grandmamma, who returns from a long residence in France, takes her from her friends and attempts to chaperone her. The whole tone of the society is so vulgar, the manners of persons who pass for well-bred are so bad, that one is almost inclined to doubt what was said of the novel—that it was a perfect picture of fashionable life in its time.

Miss Burney wrote several other novels after *Evelina*, one of which, *Cecelia*, had almost as great a success even as *Evelina*. Her fame led to her appointment as one of the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen of George III, a position which was much more respectable than it was pleasant. When about forty she married a French officer, M. D'Arblay, and after that published an account of her own life, *The Memoirs of Mme. D'Arblay*, which is one of the most sincere and entertaining books in literature. She begins with the account of her writing *Evelina;* tells all the triumphs of her authorship; gives striking and life-like pictures of Dr. Johnson, and the other great men and women she met; and finally takes us into the court of George the III, and shows us her very uncomfortable life there among the royal personages. These memoirs are most delightful reading, and give one a very vivid idea of the society of which Miss Burney was a part.

By the time *Evelina* appeared, the novel had begun to be felt as one of the strongest forces in literature. Miss Burney led a crowd of woman-writers who appeared rapidly during the last years of the century. For the first time in the history of English literature, a field was opened where woman could work in rivalry with man; in the novel she could equal and sometimes surpass him, and from that time

to this the woman-writer of novels has held her place among the best.

Mrs. Anne Radcliffe was famous as a writer of high-wrought fictions. Chief among these are the *Romance of the Forest*, and *The Mysteries of Udolpho*. White-robed figures walking by moonlight, black-robed men, ruined castles, midnight groans, all these were part of the machinery of her stories. They were no doubt very thrilling and sensational in their day, but beside more modern successes in that line, they appear quite tame and harmless.

Born 1764. Died 1823.

Mrs. Amelia Opie was a writer of different character from Mrs. Radcliffe. Her stories, *Father and Daughter*, *Tales of the Heart*, *Temper*, etc., as their titles show, were tales of real life, written with a rather too obvious moral, and hardly vigor enough to keep them alive.

Born 1769. Died 1853.

Miss Maria Edgeworth, who was a native of Ireland, laid most of the scenes of her books in that country. Her stories for children in *The Parents' Assistants*, of *Lazy Lawrence*, *Simple Susan*, and her tale of *Rosamund*, *Frank*, *Harry* and *Lucy*, pleased the children of a generation ago, but are now very little read.

Born 1767. Died 1849.

Then came the Porter sisters, Jane and Anna Maria, the first of whom wrote those stately, old-fashioned novels, *Thaddeus of Warsaw* and *The Scottish Chiefs*, over which our grandmothers hung enraptured. And at the beginning of our century came Miss Jane Austin, the author of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Sense and Sensibility*, who wrote with a naturalness and good sense which has made her a favorite with readers even to our time. These, with many others, kept the circulating libraries of the time supplied with new books, till early in this century the fame of all others was clouded by the great splendor of Walter Scott's success as the *Novelist of History*.

Born 1775. Died 1817.

TALK XLIX.

The Work of Thomas Percy and James Macpherson, and the Sad Story of Thomas Chatterton, the Boy-Poet.

In 1765, about the time that Goldsmith published the artless story of dear old Dr. Primrose, Bishop Thomas Percy, who was a friend of both Goldsmith and Dr. Johnson, published a collection of old English Ballads, which he called *The Reliques of Ancient English Poetry.* I can fancy that the readers of the time were growing tired of the exact and didactic sort of verses which had been fashionable for so many years, and welcomed a draught from the real springs of English poetry, which lay hidden in those old songs.

Bishop Percy, a scholar of elegant tastes, was already known as a writer of some merit, when the design of publishing a collection of English Ballad poetry occurred to him. He had in his library an old *MSS.* containing songs and ballads, some of them dating earlier than Chaucer, others written as late as the seventeenth century. This *MSS.* had been marred by time and mold and other causes, until in some places words or whole lines were illegible; in others, half a leaf was wanting. To many it would have seemed a hopeless task to decipher the tattered and time-stained pages, but Dr. Percy had just the taste and skill for the work he undertook; he seems to have had a knack at renovation which certain menders of old pictures have shown, and to have been able to supply missing words and lines, to create an old ballad out of detached fragments with such skill that one could not detect his handiwork from the original. Adding to his own manuscript old ballads from many other sources, he at last produced the three vol-

Born 1728.
Died 1811.

umes of *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, for which every lover of ballads has been grateful to him from that time to this. Here are to be found the old rhymes of *Chevy Chase*, the *Battle of Otterbourne*, *Sir Patrick Spence*, the *Babes in the Wood*, some of the ballads of *Robin Hood*, and many more dear old rhymes, which in our childhood we learned by heart. The interest which this work excited was as great as it deserved to be, and Percy won by it a place in literature which none of his other works could have gained for him.

While Bishop Percy was making his collection of antique English poetry, James Macpherson was working in a similiar field. A native of Scotland, he had become very interested in the old Gaelic* speech of his forefathers. He claimed that he had discovered some remains in manuscript of the ancient Gaelic bard, Ossian, and gave them to the world
1762. in a poetical-prose translation of his own. This poetry, which was wild and picturesque, like the early bardic poetry, was at once read and admired. A very few lines will give an idea of the style of *Ossian*. I select these from the longest poem, *Fingal*, which celebrates the deeds of the famous Gaelic warrior, *Fingal*.

"Fingal, like a beam from heaven, shone in the midst of his people. His heroes gather round him. He sends forth the voice of his power. 'Raise my standards on high; spread them on Lena's wind like the flames of an hundred hills. Let them sound on the winds of Erin and remind us of the fight. Ye sons of the roaring streams that pour from a thousand hills, hear ye the king of Morven; attend to the words of his power. Gaul, strongest arm of death; Oscar, of the future fights; Connal, son of the blue shields of Sora; Dermid of the dark brown hair; Ossian, king of many songs, be near your father's arm.' We reach the sunbeam of battle, the standard of the king. Each hero exulted with joy, as waving it flew in the wind. It was studded with gold above as the blue wide shell of the mighty sky. Each hero had his standard, too, and each his gloomy men. * * Now, like an hundred different winds that pour through many vales, divided, dark the sons of Selma advanced.

* *Gaelic was that branch of the Keltic language spoken by the early Irish and Scotch. The other Keltic speech (the Kymric) was the native tongue of the Britons.*

Cromla echoed around. How can I relate the deaths when we closed in the strife of arms. O daughter of Toscar! bloody were our hands. The gloomy ranks of Lochlin fell like the banks of the roaring Cona! Our arms were victorious on Lena. Each chief fulfilled his promise, * * Thou hast seen the sun retire red and slow behind his cloud, night gathering round on the mountain, while the unfrequent blast roars in the narrow vale. At length the rain beats hard; thunder roars in peals; lightning glares on the rocks; spirits ride on beams of fire. The strength of the mountain streams comes roaring down the hills. Such was the noise of battle, maid of the arm of snow! Why, daughter of Toscar, why that tear? The maids of Lochlin have cause to weep. The people of their country wail. Bloody are the blue swords of our race of heroes."

The work of Percy and Macpherson both caused hot discussion in literary circles. Bishop Percy's collection had aroused a dispute among other scholars of ancient poetry, concerning his right to amend the old ballads by adding or supplying his own words or lines where the originals were missing; although Percy had done his work in the best of faith, and in all honesty, telling just what part of the work was his own, yet the criticism upon him for these interpolations into the old text was so sharp that the poor bishop must have felt as if he had unexpectedly put his head into a hive of stinging bees.

In the case of Macpherson and his Ossianic poems, the dispute ran higher. One party believed that these poems were really translations from the Gaelic; another party declared Macpherson had composed them himself, and the two factions belabored each other with arguments and abuse. During most of the discussion, Macpherson maintained a silence which seems rather obstinate; and there never was any absolute settlement of the inquiry as to the originality of the poetry. It seems probable, however, that, although they were, in the main, written by Macpherson, they really were founded on fragments of old songs of the Keltic bards, which had been preserved by tradition in the highlands of Scotland.

But the dispute about the works of Percy and Macpher-

son was slight, compared with that which arose concerning the writings of Thomas Chatterton, the boy-poet, one of the greatest prodigies in the whole history of our literature.

Thomas Chatterton was born in the interesting old town of Bristol. His mother, left a widow just before the birth of this son, started a milliner's shop, and bravely took upon herself the burden of supporting and educating her family. At five years old her boy Chatterton was sent to school, but as the manner of imparting instruction does not seem to have taken hold of his infant mind, he stayed there a year without learning his letters, and at six, the teacher reported him to his mother as a hopeless dunce. Just before this time he saw an old French book with illuminated letters, and so fell in love with it, that his mother conceived the idea of teaching him his letters from another ancient book which she owned, an old copy of the Bible in the black-letter* text, in which the early English books were printed. From this old text he learned to read, and when once he had mastered the alphabet, books became his delight. By the time he was eight, this hopeless dunce had devoured every book he could lay hands upon. He went to a free school in his town, and had for a tutor a man named Phillips, who sometimes wrote verses for the current newspapers. For him Chatterton felt a warm friendship, and Phillips seems to have been the only person about him, able in the least to sympathize with his genius.

Born 1752. Died 1770.

The old church of St. Mary's, at Bristol, in which one of Chatterton's uncles had been a sexton, was an ancient and interesting old building. In the fifteenth century it had been repaired and partly rebuilt by worthy Mr. William Cannynge, a rich citizen of Bristol. In the time of Chatterton's father, a chest in a room over the church porch had been opened, and a quantity of old papers, among them the deeds of the church and other papers relative to William Cannynge's bequest, had been taken out and removed for

*Black-letter was the old German text, which when printed looks very black, first brought by Caxton to England from the Netherlands.

safe keeping. Some of these old parchments, considered worthless, had fallen into the hands of Chatterton's father who carried off a quantity to his house.

Chatterton had grown to be eleven or twelve, and had already begun to write verses, when one day he came upon some pieces of this old manuscript. He was at once interested in its history, and collecting all he could find, he carried them off to a room in his mother's house, of which he kept the key, and locked up these treasures there, guarding them henceforth from all eyes. He seems to have spent all his leisure pouring over and imitating the writing of the MSS. He kept his writing materials in this room, and he added to these ochre and lampblack, to counterfeit the yellow and grimy look of the parchment.

At fifteen the boy was apprenticed to an attorney, who proved a very disagreeable and exacting master. Here he was set to work as copying-clerk, and employed in all the various capacities of an office drudge. Yet he still found time for his work with the old manuscripts, and at length wrote to Dodsley, a bookseller in London, that he had a valuable collection of poems for publication, written by Thomas Rowley, a priest of Bristol, in the fifteenth century, and a friend of Mr. Cannynge, the benefactor of the Bristol church.

These poems were written in wonderful imitation of old black letter *MSS.* in text, in spelling and in style. But the poor boy could get little notice from either the bookseller or the rich patrons of literature, to whom he sent an account of these treasures. Discouraged at his want of success in Bristol, he resolved to go to London and live by his pen.

He was only a little more than seventeen, when in the spring of 1770, he came up to the great city with high hopes, and full of courage. He began at once to write for magazines and newspapers, and at first met with enough success to encourage him in splendid dreams of fame and

fortune. He wrote glowing accounts to his mother and sister of what he intended to achieve; he spent his earnings in presents for them; a set of china for his mother, a fan for his sister, and other trinkets to send home to Bristol. But his bright hopes faded; the little money he could earn was barely enough for his scanty support; he gradually fell from his lofty mood, to one of despair. Forced by necessity, he went in midsummer to take a cheap lodging in the house of a dressmaker, in London. Too proud to make known his wants or ask assistance, he was soon on the verge of starvation. One evening in August, when he had been for two or three days without his dinner, his landlady, mistrusting his condition, invited him to dine with her. With characteristic pride he refused the dinner, and shutting himself up in his room, he ended his short, sad life with a dose of arsenic. He was found dead next morning in his room, among a litter of papers torn into bits, which he had destroyed before taking the poison, without a word of farewell or explanation. Thus ended in suicide and despair, the brief life of the greatest prodigy in the history of English literature.

It was after his death that the discussion about the poetry which he claimed was written by Thomas Rowley, began. It was a controversey much hotter, and engaged men more eminent, than either Percy's Ballads or Macpherson's translations. But the best authorities agreed that the old poems must have been written by Chatterton only, and that Rowley was the *nom de plume* under which he had sought to hide his own work, believing, no doubt, that more fame would attach to them with Rowley's name, than the works themselves would bring.

The most remarkable among the poems ascribed to Rowley, are, a ballad on the *Execution of Sir Charles Bawdin; The Tragedy of Ella; The Battle of Hastings; The Tournament;* and *A Description of Cannynge's Feast.*

The *Execution of Sir Charles Bawdin*, although it has

less poetical merit than *Ella*, is most in keeping with the antique style he strove to imitate, and has in it a good deal of the ring of the early ballad. It begins thus:—

"The feathered songster chanticleer*
Had wound her bugle horn,
And told the early villager,
The coming of the morn.

"King Edward saw the ruddy streaks
Of light eclipse the gray,
And heard the raven's croaking throat
Proclaim the fated day.

"'Thou'st right,' quoth he, 'for by the God
That sits enthroned on high!
Charles Bawdin and his fellows twain
To-day shall surely die.'

"Then with a jug of nappy ale,
His knights did on him wait,
'Go tell the traitor, that to-day
He leaves this mortal state.'

"Sir Canterlone then bended low,
With heart brimful of woe;
He journeyed to the castle-gate,
And to Sir Charles did go.

"But when he came, his children twain,
And eke his loving wife,
With briny tears did wet the floor
For good Sir Charles' life.

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* As the ancient spelling which Chatterton used was merely the artificial form into which he put his verses, and it would make it more difficult to read if I followed it, I give it to you in ordinary spelling. This is a specimen of the stanzas in antique spelling.

"The feathered songster chanti cleere.
Han wounde hys bugle horn;
And tolde the earlie villager,
The commynge of the morn.

"King Edward saw the ruddie streakes
Of lyghte eclypse the greie,
And herde the raven's crokynge throte,
Proclaime the fated daye.

"'O, good Sir Charles!' said Canterlone,
'Bad tidings do I bring.'
'Speak boldly, man,' said brave Sir Charles,
'What says the traitor king?"

"'I grieve to tell, before yon sun
Shall from the welkin fly,
He hath upon his honour sworn
That thou shalt surely die.'

"'We all must die,' said brave Sir Charles,
'Of that I am not afraid.
'What boots to live a little space?
Thank Jesus, I'm prepared.'"

In spite of the intercession of Sir Charles' friends, among whom is worthy Mr. Cannynge, of Bristol, the king refuses to repeal his sentence, and the knight, after an affecting leave-taking with his wife and children, is led out to execution.

"Before him went the council-men,
In scarlet robes and gold
And tassels spangling in the sun,
Most glorious to behold;

"The friars of St. Augustine next
Appeared to the sight;
All clad in homely russet weeds
Of godly monkish plight;

"In different parts a godly psalm
Most sweetly they did chant;
Behind their backs six minstrels came,
Who tuned the strange bataunt.

"Then five-and-twenty archers came;
Each one the bow did bend,
From rescue of King Henry's fiends,
Sir Charles for to defend.

"Bold as a lion came Sir Charles,
Drawn on a cloth-laid sledde
By two black steeds in trappings white,
With plumes upon their head.

"Behind him five-and-twenty more
Of archers strong and stout,

With bended bow each one in hand,
  Marched in goodly rout.

" Saint James' friars marched next,
  Each one his part did chant;
Behind their backs six minstrels came,
  Who tuned the strange bataunt.

" Then came the mayor and aldermen,
  In cloth of scarlet decked;
And their attending men, each one
  Like eastern princes tricked.

" And after them a multitude
  Of citizens did throng;
The windows were all full of heads
  As he did pass along."

In the midst of this gorgeous procession the knight goes on to death, steadfast and unafraid; he mounts the scaffold without trembling, and beards the king as a traitor to his very face. Then with a prayer—

" Kneeling down, he laid his head
  Most seemly on the block;
Which from his body fair at once
  The able headsman stroke.

" And out the blood began to flow
  And round the scaffold twine;
And tears enough to wash't away
  Did flow from each man's eyen.
* * * * *

" This was the end of Bawdin's fate.
  God prosper long our king!
And grant he may with Bawdin's soul
  In heaven God's mercy sing."

Besides the poems which Chatterton pretended were written by Rowley, he published almost as many others under his own name. These are not equal in merit to the Rowley poems, but they show promise of a genius which would have grown and ripened with age. As a specimen of his style when he was not trying to conceal himself behind the name of the fifteenth century monk, we will read a few stan-

zas from an *Elegy* he wrote on Mr. Phillips, his teacher in Bristol free school, whose death he laments, in a measure like that of Gray's *Elegy*. He begins by praising Phillips as a poet (he had written verses while Chatterton was his pupil,) and then bewails his loss as a friend in these lines:

"Wet with the dew, the yellow hawthorns bow;
The rustic whistles through the echoing cave;
Far o'er the lea the breathing cattle low,
And the full Avon lifts the darkened wave.

"Now as the mantle of the evening swells,
Upon my mind I feel a thickening gloom,
Ah! could I charm, by necromantic spells,
The soul of Phillips from the deathly tomb!

"Then would we wander through this darkened vale
In converse such as heavenly spirits use,
And, borne upon the pinions of the gale,
Hymn the Creator, and invoke the muse."

* * * * * *

"Now rest my muse, but only rest to weep
A friend most dear by every sacred tie;
Unknown to me be comfort, peace, or sleep;
Phillip's is dead—'tis pleasure then to die.

"Few are the pleasures Chatterton e'er knew,
Short were the moments of his transient peace,
But melancholy robbed him of those few;
And this hath bid all future comfort cease."

These verses are crude and boyish, but it is the crudity of genius, not the sort of precocity that exhausts itself in one or two efforts. We must believe that if Chatterton had only been strong and patient enough to have waited a little longer, or if he had found one helping hand stretched out to hold him up in time of sorest need, he might have stood in the front rank of poets.

These works of Percy, Macpherson and Chatterton, were all published within a period of less than ten years. These re-prints of old English songs, these fragments restored from old Keltic bards, even the ballads in which poor Chatterton imitated the lays of an elder age, all indicated a return to

a fresher and more natural school of poetry. For almost a century, popular taste had been held in a sort of bondage by Dryden, Pope, and the poets who followed them. Even the untaught lay of the earliest minstrel was a refreshment to ears which were tired of the see-saw verses, rhymed in pairs, which had so long been heard. Thus we see it is quite natural that this should lead finally to a reaction towards something new and fresh in poetic treatment, and to a change in popular taste.

TALK L.

On William Cowper and Robert Burns.

William Cowper stands midway between two events in the history of poetry—the going out of Pope and the coming in of Wordsworth. He was a boy of thirteen when Pope died, with the reputation of being the greatest of English poets, and in 1800, the year of Cowper's death, a few people were beginning to suspect that Wordsworth was the foremost poet of a new order. If we look closely into Cowper's poetry, I think we shall find in it a remembrance of Pope, and a prophecy of Wordsworth.

Born 1731. Died 1800.

His life was early clouded with a great sorrow. At six years, he lost his mother. One of his most feeling poems, *Lines on Receipt of my Mother's Picture*, speaks of this grief :

"Oh! mother! when I learned that thou wast dead,
Say, wast thou conscious of the tears I shed?
Hovered thy spirit o'er thy sorrowing son,
Wretch even then, life's journey just begun?
Perhaps thou gav'st me, though unfelt, a kiss;
Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep, in bliss.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

"I therefore purpose not, or dream
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date;
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

"No voice divine the storm allayed
No light propitious shone,
When snatched from all effectual aid
We perished, each alone.—
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulf than he."

One noticeable thing in Cowper's verses, is his sympathy with the humanity of which he was part, a feeling for the suffering and oppressed everywhere. There is hardly a poem of his which does not speak this. *The Task* is full of such lines—

"My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled."

And again—

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me when I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned."

This tenderness in Cowper breaks out even for the most helpless animal—

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility), the man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

This spirit of humanity, of sympathy for the sorrows, and ardor for the rights of man, had long needed a voice among the poets, and it was only a year later than Cowper's *Task*, when a little volume of poems appeared, in which this voice spoke with a power it had never before possessed.

Born 1759. Died 1796. This volume was published in Scotland, and written by Robert Burns, a poet of the people. He was the son of a farmer and was himself a farm laborer till manhood. Without training, or the

Washed headlong from on board.
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

"Not long beneath the 'whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away:
But waged with death a lasting strife—
Supported by despair of life.

"He shouted; nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course;
But so the furious blast prevailed
That pitiless, perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

"Some succor, still, they could afford,
And such as storms allow—
The cask, the coop, the floated cord—
Delayed not to bestow;
But he, they knew, not ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

"Nor cruel as it seemed, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea
Alone could rescue them,
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

"He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power
His destiny repelled,
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried 'Adieu!'

"At length his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more;
For by the toil subdued he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

* * * * * *

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culture of the schools, he was a born poet, singing his songs in the dialect of Scotland, the homely English spoken in the Highlands, often inelegant and full of roughness, but rich in expression and feeling. As he was fettered with no rules of verse-making, Burns sang with an ease and freedom that brought back the earlier days of song. Yet his poetry had also a ring in it that was the echo of the modern time. It was ten years after the American Revolution which had declared that men were equal in rights; it was on the very threshold of the French Revolution—an outburst of democracy that revenged the wrongs the French people had suffered for centuries—that Burns began to sing. It is not strange that from lips like his, his voice rang like a Slogan-cry when he spoke for humanity.

Poetry had not before found vent in words like these:

HONEST POVERTY.

"Is there for honest poverty
  Who hangs his head and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that;
  Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp!
  The man's the gold for a' that.

"What though on homely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin* grey and a' that!
Gie fool's their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er so poor,
  Is king of men for a' that.

"A prince can make a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke and a that;
But an honest man's above his might,
  Good faith! he maunna fa'† that.

* Humble gray.
† Must not try that.

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'Bad tidings do I bring.'
'Speak boldly, man,' said brave Sir Charles,
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Perhaps a tear, if souls can weep, in bliss.
I heard the bell tolled on thy burial day;
I saw the hearse that bore thee slow away;
And turning from my nursery window, drew
A long, long sigh, and wept a last adieu."

The sadness which began so young, was made deeper by his fear of being insane, a disease which threatened him early in life; and also by his morbid religious fears. Although a pious, pure-souled man, the gloomy doctrines of his belief took such hold on his mind, that he was made miserable by them through life, and they hung like a black pall over the future.

Yet his poetry is by no means all sadness, and is sometimes bright and gay. He began to write later than most poets, and writing became his chief pleasure, and helped to avert that insanity which had twice attacked him. He published first a volume of short poems. Later appeared *The Task*, the longest and most famous of all his works. This begins with the praise of the sofa; traces its growth from a three-legged stool to a luxurious couch; and then leading away from the fireside, by which the sofa is placed the poem falls into rural wanderings, in which the poet talks of nature and her lessons. This measure is blank verse, and although in subject it is not unlike some of those long didactic poems written earlier than Cowper, it is in a natural and hearty tone that makes it far superior to most poetry of that style.

Perhaps Cowper's most widely-read poem is the ballad of *John Gilpin*. This story was told him one evening by a lady who had encouraged him to write, and who suggested the subject of *The Task* to him. The picture of Gilpin, galloping off a horse that would not be stopped, so touched Cowper's sense of humor, that he could hardly sleep for laughter the night after hearing it, and could not rest till he had put it in a ballad.

The last poem he wrote was *The Castaway*, one of the dreariest and saddest of poems. This seems like a picture of Cowper's own mind, and he himself traces the likeness in the first and last stanzas:

> "Obscurest night involved the sky,
> Atlantic billows roared,
> When such a destined wretch as I,

Washed headlong from on board.
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home forever left.

"Not long beneath the 'whelming brine,
Expert to swim, he lay;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away:
But waged with death a lasting strife—
Supported by despair of life.

"He shouted; nor his friends had failed
To check the vessel's course;
But so the furious blast prevailed
That pitiless, perforce,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

"Some succor, still, they could afford,
And such as storms allow—
The cask, the coop, the floated cord—
Delayed not to bestow;
But he, they knew, not ship, nor shore,
Whate'er they gave, should visit more.

"Nor cruel as it seemed, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that flight, in such a sea
Alone could rescue them,
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

"He long survives, who lives an hour
In ocean self-upheld;
And so long he, with unspent power
His destiny repelled,
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried 'Adieu!'

"At length his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more;
For by the toil subdued he drank
The stifling wave, and then he sank.

* * * * * *

"I therefore purpose not, or dream
Descanting on his fate,
To give the melancholy theme
A more enduring date;
But misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

"No voice divine the storm allayed
No light propitious shone,
When snatched from all effectual aid
We perished, each alone.—
But I, beneath a rougher sea,
And whelmed in deeper gulf than he."

One noticeable thing in Cowper's verses, is his sympathy with the humanity of which he was part, a feeling for the suffering and oppressed everywhere. There is hardly a poem of his which does not speak this. *The Task* is full of such lines—

"My soul is sick with every day's report
Of wrong and outrage, with which earth is filled."

And again—

"I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me when I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
That sinews bought and sold have ever earned."

This tenderness in Cowper breaks out even for the most helpless animal—

"I would not enter on my list of friends,
(Though graced with polished manners and fine sense,
Yet wanting sensibility), the man who needlessly sets foot upon a worm."

This spirit of humanity, of sympathy for the sorrows, and ardor for the rights of man, had long needed a voice among the poets, and it was only a year later than Cowper's *Task*, when a little volume of poems appeared, in which this voice spoke with a power it had never before possessed.

Born 1759. Died 1796. This volume was published in Scotland, and written by Robert Burns, a poet of the people. He was the son of a farmer and was himself a farm laborer till manhood. Without training, or the

culture of the schools, he was a born poet, singing his songs in the dialect of Scotland, the homely English spoken in the Highlands, often inelegant and full of roughness, but rich in expression and feeling. As he was fettered with no rules of verse-making, Burns sang with an ease and freedom that brought back the earlier days of song. Yet his poetry had also a ring in it that was the echo of the modern time. It was ten years after the American Revolution which had declared that men were equal in rights; it was on the very threshold of the French Revolution—an outburst of democracy that revenged the wrongs the French people had suffered for centuries—that Burns began to sing. It is not strange that from lips like his, his voice rang like a Slogan-cry when he spoke for humanity.

Poetry had not before found vent in words like these:

HONEST POVERTY.

"Is there for honest poverty
  Who hangs his head and a' that?
The coward slave, we pass him by,
  We dare be poor for a' that!
For a' that, and a' that;
  Our toils obscure, and a' that;
The rank is but the guinea's stamp!
  The man's the gold for a' that.

"What though on homely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin* grey and a' that!
Gie fool's their silks, and knaves their wine,
  A man's a man for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show and a' that;
The honest man, though e'er so poor,
  Is king of men for a' that.

"A prince can make a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke and a that;
But an honest man's above his might,
  Good faith! he maunna fa'† that.

* Humble gray.
† Must not try that.

For a' that, and a' that.
Their dignities and a' that,
The pith of sense, and pride of worth,
Are higher rank than a' that.

"Then let us pray that come it may,
As come it *will*, for a' that,
That sense and worth o'er all the earth,
May bear the gree* and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
Its coming yet for a' that,
That man to man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that."

These were noble lines, and Burns wrote many such. He is also full of the true spirit of song; arch, tender, exquisite. Never, since the early song-writers, had there been anything more natural than his little love-songs.

"She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife of mine.

"I never saw a fairer,
I never loved a dearer,
And next my heart I'll wear her
For fear my jewel tine.†

"The world's march we share it,
The wrestle and the care o't
With her I'll blithely bear it,
And think my lot sublime."

Or this:

"Oh, my love is like the red, red rose
That's newly sprung in June;
Oh, my love is like the melody
That's sweetly played in tune.
As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
So deep in love am I,
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Though all the seas run dry."

* Shall take the degree or their true rank.

† Tine—be lost.

Of such songs as these Burns wrote scores; and yet, in the midst of their careless music, the deeper undersong constantly makes itself heard, as this plea for human charity:

"Then, gently scan your brother-man,
Still gentler sister-woman,
Tho' they may gang a kenning wrang,†
To step aside is human.
* * * *
Who made the heart, 'tis He alone
Decidedly can try us;
He knows each cord, its various tone;
Each spring, its various bias.
Then at the balance let's be mute—
We never can adjust it—
What 's done we partly may compute,
But know not what 's resisted."

Just about the same time with Cowper and Burns, came George Crabbe, whose first poem of any note, *The Village*, was published a year or two before Cowper's *Task*. There is something in Crabbe which reminds one of Cowper, and something besides the title which recalls Goldsmith's *Deserted Village*. He paints scenes of nature, and domestic life among the poor. His *Tales* in verse, which were taken from humble life, first gave him a name among poets. Then he wrote *Tales of the Hall*, and drew his characters from a higher rank, but these were not nearly as happy in their description as the first. They were very much liked and read in the early part of this century, but I think Crabbe's day as a poet is past, and that he is one whose name will remain in the archives of the poets long after his poetry has ceased to be read. He was too realistic to be a great poet; every line he wrote was true to nature, but Poetry must not be the naked Truth —Truth's fair form must be veiled by Fancy in order to enter the ideal world of Poetry—as you will see by the following half dozen lines running in the beaten track of verse Although there never was a measure so well adapted to

Born 1754. Died 1832.

† Gang a kenning wrang—to go a little wrong.

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common-place subjects as this, yet in Crabbe's hands it sometimes is more than common-place; it is comically matter-of-fact. This, in his best style, is the opening of one of the Tales:

> "Genius! thou gift of heaven! thou light divine!
> Amid what dangers art thou doomed to shine!
> Oft will thy body's weakness check thy force,
> Oft damp thy vigor, and impede thy course;
> And trembling nerves compel thee to restrain
> Thy noble efforts, to contend with pain;
> Or Want (sad guest,) will in thy presence come,
> And breathe, around, her melancholy gloom;
> So life's low cares will thy proud thought confine,
> And make her sufferings, her impatience, thine."

It is difficult to decide among what group of poets to class Samuel Rogers. He was contemporary of the whole line, from Cowper almost to our own time. His first poems appeared when Cowper began to write; his *Pleasures of Memory* was published about the time Wordsworth was bringing out the *Lyrical Ballads.* His *Italy* was nearly contemporary with the death of Shelley, and he lived to see Tennyson called the greatest poet of this generation. At his hospitable home, the abode of good taste in Literature and Art, one might have met the finest wits of more than half this century.

Born 1762. Died 1855.

Rogers' *Pleasures of Memory* was one of those didactic poems, such as Akenside's *Pleasures of the Imagination*, which appeared fifty years earlier, or Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*, written a little later, in which the poet exalts one quality of the mind over all the others, and makes it the theme to hang all the poet's musings on nature and human life. A dozen lines of his apostrophe to memory shall suffice to show the poet's style.

> "Hail, memory, hail! in thy exhaustless mine
> From age to age unnumbered treasures shine!
> Thought and her shadowy brood thy call obey,
> And place and time are subject to thy sway!
> Thy pleasures most we feel when most alone,

The only pleasure we can call our own.
Lighter than air, Hope's summer visions die,
If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky;
If but a beam of sober reason play,
Lo, Fancy's fairy frost-work melts away!
But can the wiles of Art, the grasp of power,
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour?
These, when the trembling spirit wings her flight,
Pour round her path a stream of living light,
And gild those pure and perfect realms of rest
Where virtue triumphs, and her sons are blest!"

This poem on *Italy* was in blank verse, with now and then a fragment in prose, and is a sort of poetical journal of a tour in Italy, in which he puts down descriptions of places, the impressions made on his mind by the new scenes, and various tales or adventures he met with in the travels. The story of *Genevra*, the bride who was hid in the oak chest on her bridal day, and was never found till years after, when they found a skeleton in decayed bridal robes, is one of the best parts of *Italy*. These poets, Cowper, Burns, Crabbe and Rogers, may be said to stand midway between the old and the new in poetry. Crabbe and Rogers were not men to make any revolution, and were poets who would take their color from the greater geniuses around them, but Cowper showed signs of a change, while Burns' songs may be said to be the first awaking of a new spirit in English poetry. Although he founded no school and made no revolution in literature, he is the minstrel of a new order. Hitherto the minstrel in our fancy sits in the court of the king and sings only to the ear of royalty. He has gone to battle with the king's hosts, and sometimes fallen in the king's hour of triumph. But this new minstrel, who sings songs to poverty and honest manhood, whose love is in no royal bowers, and whose triumphs are not of war—this is Robert Burns, the ploughman—*the minstrel of the people!*

INTRODUCTORY.

In studying the progress of Poetry from earliest times, you will see that like laws, or government, or religion, it is subject to many changes, and that there are revolutions in literature, as much as in history. The poets of one period have all a certain likeness; even though each may be in his way original, his work will bear the mark of his own time, and follow the prevailing fashion. This continues till some man of great originality and power appears, who by his genius turns taste into new channels, and drawing after him a crowd who imitate him in his manner, founds what we call a *new school* of poetry.

We have seen how Pope had thus made a school in which, as somebody says "French taste was ruled by English understanding," and for almost a century his influence kept poetry in smooth, easy, flowing rhymes; but, yet, very artificial beside the naturalness of the earlier poets. Coleridge, of whom I am now going to speak, says, "the Pope school sacrificed the heart to the head," and that is, I think, as good a statement as can be made of it.

I pointed out in my last talk that in Cowper there is an effort to make the head and heart work together; and showed that in the Scotch poet Burns, we have the first outburst of the real minstrel poet since the seventeenth century. But neither Cowper nor Burns was a man to found a school of poetry, they were only men who influenced it. Such work

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as Percy and Macpherson had done also aroused a taste for a new order of verse; but the great departure from Pope, and the setting up of new ideas as the basis of poetry, was begun by what we call the *Lake School.* It is of this school that I am going to give you a brief account.

You remember I have said that Robert Burns began to write between two great revolutions—the revolution of the people in America and in France. In both these revolutions there was everything to stir up men's thoughts, and in the stirring up of thoughts there must always follow a stimulus to poetry, because poetry is only the highest thought of the most poetical minds, inspired by the most stirring events. The thought underlying the American and French revolutions was, that *all men, even the poorest and lowest, have supreme rights—rights to life, freedom, and to the largest amount of happiness possible.* They were the same thoughts that the best minds in America put into our Declaration of Independence—the same that Burns put into his *Man's a Man for a' That.* It is plain, is it not, that these thoughts, which in their birth, shook governments, religion and society, as if they were reeds in a tempest, must enter into and move the poet more than any other man of his time.

When these doctrines of liberty, equality, and brotherhood among men, were spreading far and wide by the French Revolution there were two young men in England in whose minds they took root. The first of these young men was William Wordsworth, a student in Cambridge college, who early in youth had felt himself consecrated as a poet; the other was Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was in London, at Christ Hospital school, and who was also fired with a poetical ardor as intense as that of Wordsworth.

Born 1770. Died 1850.

Born 1772. Died 1834.

Of these two young men William Wordsworth was the elder by two years. They had not met each other when the revolutionary fire broke out in them, although they

afterwards became warm friends, but both had written verses on the French Revolution, and both were smitten by the same ardor for equal rights and human brotherhood.

Wordsworth left college in 1791 and went to France, then in the midst of her revolution. I may as well tell you here that the horrors of bloodshed which followed the revolution shook Wordsworth's faith in the ideas at work there, and led to a change in opinions which turned him from a violent democrat to a staunch English monarchist.

In the meantime, Coleridge went to Cambridge, from whence he ran away and came to London, with some vague idea of living by his pen. He soon grew so poor that, as a resource against starving, he enlisted as a private in the cavalry.

He knew nothing of soldiering, and could not even sit a horse properly. When suddenly asked his name, not wishing to give his real one, he says, "I answered Cumberback; and verily my habits were so little equestrian, that my horse, I doubt not, was of that opinion."

His friends found him out, and he was released from the service. Not long after he met Robert Southey, a young man of nearly his own age, and of opinions after his own heart. Southey, also, was a radical, and a budding poet, who had written in college a poem, *Wat Tyler*, which had been pronounced seditious and revolutionary. The two began a friendship natural to their age and their congenial opinions; a friendship afterwards made stronger by their marriage with two sisters. They made a plan to emigrate to America and form a colony here which should be established on the ideas of religion and government which they held sacred, but this plan failed, and while Southey went to cool his youthful opinions in a tour in Europe, Coleridge went down to a little town in the south of England, where he met Wordsworth for the first time. They were both filled with the same ideas, and both had published a little volume of poetry; it was natural that they should become warm friends, and

that they should exert a great influence each on the other.

Their interchange of thought, their long rambles together in the lanes and woods of rural England, led to the publication of a little volume of poems, with a preface setting forth their theories about poetry, which finally gave them and those who agreed with them the name of the *Lake School.* They were given the name from the beautiful lake region of England, in Cumberland and Westmoreland, where Wordsworth and Southey afterwards went to live. Coleridge never took up his residence there, although he was constantly going and coming, till, as Southey said, "his movements could no more be calculated than those of a comet."

The Lyrical Ballads—the first publication of the *Lake School*—was written to the theory that poetry might be the simple, natural, language of men under the influence of strong feeling; that it should be free to treat the humblest incident of daily life; that the joys and sorrows of common men were the noblest motive for verse, and that a poet was no superhuman being, but "only a man speaking to other men." This statement of the poet's purpose was the key-note of the revolution in poetry, and you will see that it was a note in harmony with a spirit very different and more modern than that of Pope, or any poet before his time.

To us there seems nothing very alarming or strange in this statement, and we have learned to love and reverence the poetry which it introduced. But the storm of criticism, of laughter, of contempt, that was raised against these poets was tremendous. For nearly twenty years public opinion was dead-set against them, and soon after the first little edition of five hundred copies was printed, the discouraged publisher gave Mr. Wordsworth his rights in the book as a worthless gift. But neither the men nor their poetry was to be crushed, and from year to year it grew more and more into favor, till at Wordsworth's death (he lived to be eighty)

he knew himself judged by most as the great poet of his generation, and by many critics ranked as the sixth great poet in the line from Chaucer.*

Having thus given you, in as few words as I could, the story of the Lake School, let me say something of the poetry of the men who founded it.

TALK LI.

On Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Of Samuel Taylor Coleridge it is always to be said with regret, that he did not accomplish as much, or as good work, as the world had a right to expect from such a man. He has left behind him comparatively little to prove that he might have been a great poet. I think this lack of accomplishment is due more to physical causes than mental ones. His father, a delicate scholarly man, was over fifty when Coleridge was born, and from him came the inheritance of a weak body and nerves sensitive to pain. In very early childhood, too much reading of fanciful stories filled his brain with visions of spectres, and gave him a tendency to mope and dream. He was sent early to school, and was only ten when he went to Christ's Hospital, the famous Blue-coat School, where he gives in one of his letters this touching picture of his privations:

"Our diet was very scanty. Every morning, a bit of dry bread, and some bad small-beer. Every evening a larger piece of bread, and cheese or butter, whichever we liked. For dinner on Sunday, boiled beef and broth; Monday, bread and butter, and milk and water; Tuesday, roast mutton; Wednesday, bread and butter and rice and milk; Thursday, boiled beef and broth; Friday, boiled mutton and broth; Saturday, bread and butter, and peas porridge. Our food was portioned, and, excepting on Wednesday, I never had enough. Our appetites were damped, never satisfied; and we had no vegetables."

---

* Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, Pope, Wordsworth.

In another letter he says:

"Conceive what I must have been at fourteen. I was in a continual low fever; my whole being was with eyes closed to every object of present sense; to crumple myself up in a sunny corner, and read, read, read—fancy myself in Robinson Crusoe's island, finding a mountain of plum cake, and eating a room for myself, and then eating it into the shape of chairs and tables—hunger and fancy."

The penalty he must pay for such an unwholesome and half-starved childhood appears early in Coleridge's life. He was hardly twenty-three when fits of torturing neuralgia seized him, for which he began to take opium, beginning with light doses, and increasing them till they grew into a habit of opium-eating, which held him for years in its bonds, and was no doubt the cause that so many of his poetic designs were not carried out. We feel that if he had had the painstaking industry of Wordsworth, he too might have realized some of those glorious plans for poetry with which he fired the minds of his friends when they were wandering together over the fields and along the brooks of Somerset. As it is, Wordsworth took the place at the head of the school which Coleridge more than any other inspired. In literature we see Coleridge as one of the powers standing behind those who climb the throne.

The Lyrical Ballads had been planned by the two poets to consist of two kinds of poetry: in one, the incidents were to be of a supernatural, imaginative kind; the other was to be on subjects drawn from ordinary life, such incidents and characters as are to found in any village. It was arranged that Coleridge should take the supernatural, and Wordsworth the simple subjects. They wandered about the fields and lanes of Somersetshire, following the course of woodland brooks, laying their poetical plans. Already their radical opinions, their former sympathy with the French Revolution, had come to the ears of friends of the government, and a spy was sent down to watch these young men, who, strolling about, note-book and pencil in hand, were suspected of mapping out the land to give it to foreign

enemies. But, although the spy listened closely, he could hear nothing but a great deal of talk about a certain *Spynosy*, which the dectetive, who was blessed with an ample organ of smell, supposed was a name given to him. This was all the treason he could report on his return to London. The two friends had already lost their ardor for republicanism and the French Revolution, and were busy discussing German philosophy; and it was the great *Spinosa* whose name the detective had taken to mean himself.

From what I have said of Coleridge's habits of work, you will not be surprised to find that when the *Lyrical Ballads* were to go to press, and Wordsworth had twenty-two poems ready, Coleridge had only the *Ancient Mariner* and a part of the wierd poem of *Christabel*, which was never finished. Hazlitt says that the *Ancient Mariner* is the only one of Coleridge's poems which he should like to put into any person's hands whom he wished to impress favorably with his great powers. No doubt he is right, yet this one poem is great enough for one reputation. It is a unique poem; there is nothing like it in literature, and every student of English poetry should read it till its beauties are familiar.

Christabel always remained a fragment, although Coleridge intended to finish it. He added a second part to it after it was first published, of which he said: "As in my first part, I had the whole present to my mind, with the wholeness, no less than the loveliness of a vision, I trust that I shall be yet able to embody in verse the three parts yet to come." It is like Coleridge that the mood for which he waited never came, and that to the last we have only the fragment. The poem of *Genevieve* or *Love*, was written as an introduction to a longer poem, which was planned and never written. It is, however, complete in itself, an exquisite little love-story in verse, and I quote it entire:

LOVE.

"All thoughts, all passions, all delights,
Whatever stirs this mortal frame,
Are but the ministers of Love,
And feed his sacred flame.

"Oft in my waking dreams do I
Live o'er again that happy hour,
When, midway on the mount, I lay
Beside the ruined tower.

"The moonshine, stealing o'er the scene,
Had blended with the lights of eve;
And she was there, my hope, my joy,
My own dear Genevieve!

"She leaned against the armed man,
The statue of the armed knight;
She stood and listened to my lay
Amid the lingering light.

"Few sorrows hath she of her own,
My hope! my joy! my Genevieve!
She loves me best whene'er I sing
The songs that make her grieve.

"I played a soft and doleful air,
I sang an old and moving story—
An old rude song that suited well
That ruin wild and hoary.

"She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
For well she knew I could not choose
But gaze upon her face.

"I told her of the knight that wore
Upon his shield a burning brand,
And that for ten long years he wooed
The lady of the land.

"I told her how he pined; and ah!
The deep, the low, the pleading tone
With which I sang another's love
Interpreted my own.

"She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face.

"But when I told the cruel scorn
That crazed that bold and lovely knight,
And that he crossed the mountain woods,
Nor rested day nor night;

"And sometimes from the savage den,
And sometimes from the darksome shade,
And sometimes startling up at once
In green and sunny glade,

"There came and looked him in the face
An angel beautiful and bright;
And that he knew it was a fiend
This miserable knight!

"And that, unknowing what he did,
He leaped amid a murderous band,
And saved from outrage worse than death
The lady of the land!

"And how she wept, and clasped his knees;
And how she tended him in vain—
And ever shone to expiate
The scorn that crazed his brain.

"And that she nursed him in a cave,
And how his sadness went away,
When on the yellow forest leaves
A dying man he lay.

"His dying words—but when I reached
That tenderest strain of all the ditty,
My faltering voice and pausing harp
Disturbed her soul with pity!

"All impulses of soul and sense
Had thrilled my guileless Genevieve,
The music and the doleful tale,
The rich and balmy eve;

"And hopes, and fears that kindle hopes,
An indistinguishable throng,
And gentle wishes long subdued,
Subdued and cherished long!

"She wept, with pity and delight,
She blushed with love and virgin shame
And like the murmur of a dream,
I heard her breathe my name.

"Her bosom heaved; she stept aside,
As conscious of my look she stept—
Then suddenly, with timorous eye,
She fled to me and wept.

his long poems you are constantly dropped thus. The divine fire in the poet never quite goes out; that spirit which in youth whirled him about in such ardor of enthusiasm for liberty, equality and fraternity, controls him in nobler fashion as he grows older and calmer, but with all this there is a prosaic strata in him like underlying granite, which will crop out.

Thus those who laughed at the *Lyrical Ballads* could always find reason for laughter. Sometimes the simplicity of these tales of sorrow or pleasure win the heart, but sometimes they touch the sense of the ludicrous. The long ballad called *Peter Bell* contains some beautiful lines. What a beautiful passage this is which describes Peter Bell's dullness to all the sweet influences of nature:

"He roved among the vales and streams
In the green wood and hollow dell;
They were his dwellings night and day—
But nature ne'er could find her way
Into the heart of Peter Bell.

"In vain, through every changeful year,
Did nature lead him as before;
A primrose by a river brim,
A yellow primrose was to him.
And it was nothing more.

"In vain through water, earth and air,
The soul of happy sound was spread;
When Peter, on some April morn,
Beneath the brown and budding thorn,
Made the warm earth his lazy bed.

"At noon, when by the forest edge,
He lay beneath the branches high,
The soft blue sky did never melt
Into his heart—he never felt
The witchery of the soft blue sky."

But to make the chief incident of this poem the sufferings of a jackass is rather a dangerous experiment, even with readers of a very humane disposition. Here is a stanza or two where Peter has beaten the poor beast till it falls exhausted:

"And then upon his side he fell,
And on the river's brink did lie;
And as he lay like one that mourned,
The beast on his tormentor turned
A shining hazel eye.

"'Twas but one mild, reproachful look,
A look more tender than severe;
And straight in sorrow, not in dread,
He turned the eyeball in his head
Towards the river deep and clear.

"Upon the beast the sapling rings,
Heaved his lank sides, his limbs they stirred;
He gave a groan, and then another,
Of that which went before the brother;
And then he gave a third."

Now this rhyming, which lasts through twenty stanzas, is not poetry, although it is very good humanity.

Wordsworth's epic poem, the *Excursion*, has the same fault of inequality. But it is so magnificent in its scope, so noble in its flights, that one skips the prosy places, almost unheeding them. Here at last was a grand epic which did not celebrate war, nor the deeds of Homeric heroes; which did not dwell in realms peopled by imaginary creatures; which soared neither to heaven nor dived to hell. In the *Excursion*, the poet led into fields and villages, among the humblest abodes, of men, learning lessons of human brotherhood in his course.

Wordsworth's shorter poems, many of them, are free from any of the faults I have hinted at. Some are nearly perfect; his sonnets, many of them, sound as if they had come from the bottom of the human heart. As this, which he writes on a view of London at sunrise:

"Earth hath not anything to show more fair;
Dull would he be of soul who could pass by
A sight so touching in its majesty;
This city doth now like a garment wear
The beauty of the morning, silent, bare;
Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples lie

Open unto the fields, and to the sky;
All bright and glittering in the smokeless air.
Ne'er did sun more beautifully steep
In his first splendor, valley, rock or hill;
Ne'er saw I, never felt, a calm so deep.
The river glideth at his own sweet will;
Dear God! the very houses seem asleep,
And all that mighty heart is lying still."

A fit tribute to Milton was this sonnet from Wordsworth:

"Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour;
England hath need of thee; she's a fen
Of stagnant waters; altar, sword and pen,
Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
Have forfeited their ancient English dower
Of inward happiness. We are selfish men.
O! raise us up, return to us again,
And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
Thy soul was like a star, and dwelt apart;
Thou had'st a voice, whose sound was like the sea;
Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free.
So did'st thou travel on life's common way,
In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart,
The lowliest duties on herself did lay."

Many of his short songs have the same purity and grandeur as these sonnets. And the simplest subjects—a flower, a bird, an incident of humble life—no one else has treated such with the sympathy Wordsworth shows.

And what shall I say of the Ode, *Intimations of Immortality*, which is enough for any one poet to have written. This, in my mind, both in form and matter, is to be set far above that Ode of Dryden's which he called the best in the language:

"There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,
The earth, and every common sight,
To me did seem
Apparelled in celestial light,
The glory and freshness of a dream.
It is not now as it has been of yore,—
Turn whereso'er I may
By night or day—

The things which I have seen, I now can see no more.

* * * * * * * * * *

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
  Hath had elsewhere its setting,
    And cometh from afar;
  Not in entire forgetfulness,
  And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory, do we come
  From God, who is our home;
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!
Shades of the prison-house begin to close
Upon the growing boy,
But he beholds the light and whence it flows;
  He sees it in his joy;
The youth, who daily farther from the east
  Must travel, still is nature's priest,
  And by the vision splendid
  Is on his way attended;
At length the man perceives it die away,
And fade into the light of common day.

* * * * * * * *

    Oh joy! that in our embers
    Is something that doth live,
    That nature yet remembers
    What was so fugitive!
The thought of our past years, in me doth breed
Perpetual benediction; not indeed
For that which is most worthy to be blest;
Delight and liberty, the simple creed
Of childhood, whether busy or at rest
With new-fledged hope still flattering in his breast—
    Not for these I raise
    The song of thanks and praise;
  But for those obstinate questionings
  Of sense and outward things,
  Fallings from us, vanishings,
  Blank misgivings of a creature
Moving about in worlds not realized,
High instincts before which our moral nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised;
    But for those first affections,
    Those shadowy recollections,

Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing,
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence; truths that wake
To punish never;
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavor,
Not man nor boy
Not all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!
Hence, in a season of calm weather,
Though inland far we be,
Our souls have sight of that immortal sea
Which brought us hither,
Can in a moment travel thither,
And see the children sport upon the shore,
And hear the mighty waters rolling ever more."

A recent English philosopher, John Stuart Mill, says that in a period of great depression he tried poetry as a resource, and found most of all a balm and healing in Wordsworth. He afterwards says he believes Wordsworth to be the true poet of unpoetic natures, for those of quiet, thoughtful tastes, without much cultivation of the imagination or the emotions. I am not sure that this is so.

Matthew Arnold, a modern critic and poet too, exalts Wordsworth much higher than Mill did. I am, myself, inclined to think that Wordsworth is not the poet for youth. One grows to love him. The ardor and fiery imagination of youth is rarely satisfied with him; he chimes in with the thoughts and aspirations of a maturer age.

Robert Southey, who is generally classed as the third in this trio of poets, hardly followed the theory of the Lake School in his choice of subjects, for they do not, as a rule, keep within the common interests of human life. His subjects are largely supernatural. His poem of *Roderick* is an old Gothic legend; *Madoc* was taken from British history; *Thalaba* is an Arabian tale; and *Kehama* is Hindoo in origin. Even his shorter poems, many of them tales told in verse,

have a weird element which is more in keeping with the *Ancient Mariner* than anything Wordsworth wrote. I quote one short story in verse from Southey, for the touch of humor in it, which gives variety to my talk. It is not specially in illustration of Southey's style, those you must study in his long poems, *Thalaba*, or *Roderick*. This is a simple ballad, called

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE.

"A well there is in the west country,
And a clearer one never was seen,
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the well of St. Keyne.

"An oak and an elm tree stand beside,
And behind does an oak tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above,
Drops to the water below.

"A traveler came to the well of St. Keyne,
Pleasant it was to his eye;
For from cock-crow he had been traveling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

"He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he,
And he sat down upon the bank,
Under the willow tree.

"There came a man from the neighboring town,
At the well to fill his pail,
On the well-side he rested it,
And bade the stranger hail.

"'Now, art thou a bachelor, stranger?' quoth he,
'For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day,
That ever thou didst in thy life.'

"'Or has your good woman, if one you have,
In Cornwall ever been?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life,
She has drank of the well of St. Keyne.'

"'I have left a good woman who never was here;'
The stranger he made reply;

'But why my draught should be better for that.
I pray you answer me why?'

"'St. Keyne,' quoth the countryman, 'many a time
Drank of this crystal well,
And before the angel summoned her,
She laid on this water a spell.

"If the husband, of this gifted well
Should drink, before his wife,
A happy man henceforth is he,
For he shall be master for life.

"But if the wife should drink of it first,
Heaven help the husband then!'
The stranger stooped to the well of St. Keyne,
And drank of the water again.

"'You drank of the well, I warrant, betimes,'
He to the countrymen said;
But the countryman smiled as the stranger spoke,
And sheepishly shook his head.

"'I hastened, as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my wife in the porch;
But i' faith, she had been wiser than I,
For she took a bottle to church.'"

Like Wordsworth, Southey was very industrious; he worked in a great many fields—history, biography, essays and fiction. At the outset of his literary career he was poor, but by his work accumulated a fair fortune, and collected a fine library. He was as much a radical as Coleridge had been in youth, but became more conservative than either of his friends, and bitterly criticized any difference from the opinions he learned to hold.

It is to be said of the Lake Poets, that they were all men of pure lives; strict adherents to principle whichever way the vane of opinion was set; good husbands, fathers and friends. In bringing back some of the virtues of an early age of poetry, they brought back none of the vices of that day, and nothing in their career marks the literary man as a Bohemian or social outlaw.

TALK LIII.

THOMAS CAMPBELL AND TOM MOORE.

JUST about the time the Lake Poets were making their first stir in the world of books, Thomas Campbell, who was a countryman of Robert Burns, first appeared in print. He was a youthful poet—only twenty-two—and his poem, the *Pleasures of Hope*, was written in that tiresome old rhyming measure used so continually since Dryden and Pope, which the Lake School did so much towards abolishing. The *Pleasures of Hope* proved a very popular poem, however, and while Wordsworth's poems fell dead from the press, Campbell's sold four editions in less than a year.

Born 1771. Died 1844.

There are strong passages in the *Pleasures of Hope*, although, as a whole, I think it dull reading. The best lines in it are some that burn with generous anger against the wrongs Poland had suffered, when divided among her oppressors and crushed out of being as a nation. Campbell's best poems are his shorter ones—*The Mariners of England*, *Battle of the Baltic*, *Hohenlinden*, *The Exile of Erin*, and the like. Every school-boy knows these, as well as *Lochiel's Warning*, *O'Connor's Child*, and *Lord Ullin's Daughter*, which are founded on old stories of the Border. In these shorter songs he had escaped from the bonds of that see-saw rhyme, and his songs and ballads are full of spirit, with a ring in the lines which is like a bugle sound. You can hear this in *The Mariners of England*, which begins:

> "Ye mariners of England,
> That guard our native seas,
> Whose flag has braved a thousand years
> The battle and the breeze!

Your glorious standard launch again
To match another foe,
And sweep through the deep
While the stormy tempests blow;
While the battle rages loud and long
And the stormy tempests blow."

Still more like martial music is the *Battle of the Baltic:*

"Of Nelson and the North,
Sing the glorious day's renown,
When to battle fierce came forth
All the might of Denmark's crown;
And her arms along the deep proudly shone;
By each gun the lighted brand,
In a bold determined hand,
And the prince of all the land'
Led them on.

"Like leviathans afloat,
Lay their bulwarks on the brine,
While the sign of battle flew
On the lofty British line;
It was ten of April morn by the chime;
As they drifted on their path,
There was silence deep as death,
And the bravest held his breath
For a time.

"But the might of England flushed
To anticipate the scene,
And her van the fleeter rushed
O'er the deadly space between.
'Hearts of oak!' our captain cried, when each gun
From its adamantine lips
Spread a death shade round the ships,
Like the hurricane eclipse
Of the sun.

"Again! again! again!
And the havoc did not slack,
Till a feeble cheer the Dane
To our cheering sent us back;
Their shots along the deep slowly boom;
They cease—and all is wail,
As they strike the shattered sail;

Or, in conflagration pale,
Light the gloom.

"Out spoke the victor then,
As he hailed them o'er the wave:
'Ye are brothers, ye are men!
And we conquer but to save!
So peace instead of death let us bring;
But yield, proud foe, thy fleet,
With the crews, at England's feet,
And make submission meet
To our King.'

"Then Denmark blessed our chief
That he gave her wounds repose;
And the sounds of joy or grief
From her people wildly rose,
As Death withdrew his shades from the day;
While the sun looked smiling bright
O'er a wide and woful sight,
Where the fires of funeral light
Died away.

"Now joy, Old England raise!
For the tidings of thy might
By the festal cities' blaze,
While the wine-cup shines in light;
And yet, amidst that joy and uproar,
Let us think of them that sleep,
Full many a fathom deep,
By thy wild and stormy steep,
Elsinore!"

Such pieces as these, vigorous and dramatic, are admirably adapted for recitation, and hence many of Campbell's minor poems have had wide circulation in reading-books and collections of poetry.

After publishing a volume of short poems, Campbell wrote his *Gertrude of Wyoming, a Tale of Pennsylvania.* It was written on a tragedy of the war of the Revolution, in which a savage band, more than half of them Indians, swept down on a little settlement in the valley of the Wyoming, and massacred the villagers, men, women, and babes,

without mercy. It was a shameful and blood-thirsty murder, and Campbell, whose sympathies were always passionately on the side of humanity, put his heart into the poem. The heorine is Gertrude, who, murdered by the enemy, dies in her husband's arms. You will see that the poem is in the Spenserian measure:

"A scene of death! where fires beneath the sun,
And blended arms and white pavillions glow;
And for the business of destruction done,
Its requiem the war-horn seemed to blow;
There, sad spectatress of her country's woe,
The lovely Gertrude, safe from present harm,
Had laid her cheek and clasped her hand of snow
On Waldegrave's shoulders, half within his arm
Enclosed, that felt her heart and hushed its wild alarm.

"But short that contemplation—sad and short,
The pause to bid each much-loved scene adieu,
Beneath the very shadow of the fort,
Where friendly swords were drawn and banners flew;
Ah! who could deem that foot of Indian crew
Was near—yet there, with lust of murderous deeds,
Gleamed, like a basilisk from woods in view,
The ambushed foeman's eye,—his volley speeds,
And Albert, Albert falls! the dear old father bleeds!

"And tranced in giddy horror, Gertrude swooned;
Yet while she clasps him lifeless to her zone,
Say, burst they borrowed from her father's wound
Those drops? O God, the life blood is her own!
And faltering as her Waldegrave's bosom thrown,
'Weep not, O love!' she cries, 'to see me bleed,
Thee, Gertrude's sad survivor, thee alone
Heaven's peace commiserate! for scarce I heed
These wounds, yet thee to leave is death, is death indeed!

"Clasp me a little longer on the brink
Of fate! while I can feel thy dear caress;
And when this heart has ceased to beat—oh! think,
And let it mitigate thy woe's excess,
That thou hast been to me all tenderness,
And friend to more than human friendship just,
Oh! by that retrospect of happiness,

And by the hopes of an immortal trust,
God shall assuage thy pangs—when I am laid in dust!

"Go, Henry, go not back when I depart,
The scene thy bursting tears too deep will move,
Where my dear father took thee to his heart,
And Gertrude thought it ecstasy to rove
With thee, as with an angel, through the grove
Of peace, imagining her lot was cast
In heaven; for ours was not like earthly love.
And must this parting be our very last?
No! I shall love thee still, when death itself is past.

* * * * * * *

"Hushed were his Gertrude's lips, but still their bland
And beautiful expressions seemed to melt
With love that could not die! and still his hand
She presses to the heart no more that felt.
Ah heart! where once each fond affection dwelt,
And features that spoke yet a soul more fair.
Mute, gazing, agonizing as he knelt—
Of them that stood encircling his dispair
He heard some friendly words; but knew not what they were."

Campbell settled in Sydenham, and there edited for ten years *The Metropolitan Magazine*, in which appeared many of his own poems. Another notable contributor to this review in its later days was a poet who had risen to fame just about the same time as Campbell. This was Thomas Moore, a native of Ireland, whose *Irish Melodies*, sung by himself to the airs of his own country, were for many years the delight of fashionable circles in London. Born 1779. Died 1852.

There is something very winning about Tom Moore, although he had a great many vanities, and more faults than some men who are not so agreeable. He was always warm-hearted and affectionate; through all changes of scenes or fortune he never neglected his good mother in Ireland nor failed in the midst of all his social triumphs to write to her, letters as full of tenderness and spirits, as if he were still a boy at her knee; he was always loving and thoughtful of his Bessy, who was herself the most devoted and unselfish of wives, and these virtues cover over much of the

light-hearted selfishness and the eager vanity with which he sought the society of the rich and great who petted him for his charming manners and accomplishments.

He was born at Dublin, with no poetical surroundings, for his parents kept a grocery and liquor shop, but he took to poetry by instinct, and began to rhyme as early as Pope.

At nineteen he went to London with some translations from the Greek poet, Anacreon, which he published by subscription and dedicated to the Prince of Wales. These made him at once known as a poet. A few years later he got an appointment of some kind at the Bermuda Islands and went abroad, making a tour on his return through the United States and Canada. He was gone in all fourteen months, and published his poems soon after his return. Some of his American poems are among his best—*The Lake of the Dismal Swamp*, *The Indian Bark* and *The Canadian Boat Song.*

He was a little over thirty when he married his dear Bessy, and settled down in Wiltshire, far enough from London so that he could not be diverted from work by the constant call of society. Here he arranged with a publisher to furnish the *Irish Melodies* at five hundred pounds a year. Thus these songs, which of all literary productions, sound the most spontaneous, were really made to order. The melodies were written to national airs of Ireland, Moore writing the verses and adapting the music to them. His own feeling and taste for music helped him, and one of their great charms was in the perfect fitness of words to music. It must have been a treat to have heard Moore sing them. Campbell said that after hearing Moore, he thought more highly of the melodies than ever before. They were sung everywhere, from the palaces of the English aristocracy to the highways of Ireland, where, even the Irish boy who drove the jaunting-car, knew the best of them by heart. Moore was feted and caressed by the great people in London, and wherever he went the doors of the best

house swung open for him. Holland House, the home of Lord and Lady Holland, which for so many years was the head-quarters of literary men, artists, and agreeable people of all sorts, was one of Moore's favorite visiting places in London, and the walls of its drawing-rooms resounded again and again to his voice as he sung his favorite songs.

The *Irish Melodies* are not all patriotic in sentiment, although many of the best are so. They are inspired by various motives, and among them are love-songs, drinking-songs, songs of country, songs of melancholy and of nature. Such songs as *The Harp that once through Tara's Halls; Believe me, if all those endearing young Charms*; *O, blame not the Bard*, are as familiar as household words wherever our language is sung. The following seems to me very characteristic in its mixture of good-fellowship and real feeling, which were a part of Moore's own nature:

"Farewell! but whenever you welcome the hour
That awakens the night-song of mirth in your bower,
Then think of the friend who once welcomed it too,
And forgot his own grief to be happy with you.
His griefs may return, not a hope may remain
Of the few that have brightened his pathway of pain;
But he ne'er will forget the short vision that threw
The enchantment around him while lingering with you.

"And still on that evening, when pleasure fills up
To the highest top sparkle each heart and each cup,
Where'er my path lies, be it gloomy or bright,
My soul, happy friends, shall be with you that night;
Shall join in your revels, your sports, and your wiles,
And return to me beaming all over with smiles,
Too blest, if it tells me, that 'mid the gay cheer,
Some kind voice had murmured, 'I wish he were here!

"Let Fate do her worst, there are relics of joy,
Bright dreams of the past, which she cannot destroy,
Which come in the night-time of sorrow and care,
And bring back the features that joy used to wear.
Long, long, be my heart with such memories filled,
Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled,
You may break, you may shatter the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still."

Another song, to his *Country's Harp*, is exquisite in its expression of the patriotic feeling which forms the basis of the melodies:

"Dear harp of my country! in darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long,
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song!
The warm lay of love, and the light note of gladness,
Have wakened thy proudest, thy holiest thrill!
But so oft hast thou echoed the deep sigh of sadness
That e'en in thy mirth it will steal from thee still.

Dear harp of my country! farewell to thy numbers,
This sweet wreath of song is the last we shall twine;
Go, sleep with the sunshine of Fame on thy slumbers,
'Till touched by some hand less unworthy than mine.
If the pulse of the patriot, soldier, or lover,
Have throbbed at our lay, this thy glory alone;
I was but the wind, passing heedlessly over,
And all the wild sweetness I waked was thy own."

It was during his success with the songs, which appeared in numbers, that Moore was asked to write an Eastern poem, a kind of work for which his lavish imagination and tropical style was very well fitted. He was a good student, as well as poet, and studied India in her legends, poetry, history, and in the accounts of travelers who had journeyed there. The result was *Lalla Roohk*, the best known of his long poems. It consists of four tales: *The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, *The Fire Worshippers*, *Paradise and The Peri*, and *The Light of the Harem;* these tales woven together by a tissue of prose, which tells the love story of *Lalla Roohk.*

Even in a subject so far away from Ireland as this poem of the East, we can see that Moore's national feeling was so strong, that he was always most of a poet whan that feeling was free to speak. In the *Fire Worshippers* he puts his feeling for his own country, into the guise of sympathy for a persecuted race, the last of the Persian Ghebers, and we can see that Iran* became Erin to him, by less than the

*The Ancient name of Persia.

ıge of a letter. Thus, of all the tales, *The Fire Wor-ıpers* has the most poetic fervor. Let us quote a few pas-ɜs, to show this :

"The moon has risen, clear and calm,
And o'er the Green sea palely shines,
Revealing Bahrein's groves of palm,
And lighting Kishma's amber vines.
Fresh smell the shores of Araby,
While breezes from the Indian sea
Blow 'round Selama's sainted cape,
And curl the shining flood beneath,
Whose waves are rich with many a grape
And cocoa-nut and flowering wreath,
Which pious seamen as they passed
Had toward that holy headland cast—
Oblations to the genii there,
For gentle skies and breezes fair!
The nightingale now bends her flight
From the high trees, where all the night
She sung so sweet, with none to listen;
And hides her from the morning star,
Where thickets of pomegranate glisten
In the clear dawn—bespangled o'er
With dew, whose night-drops would not stain
The best and brightest scimetar
That ever youthful Sultan wore,
On the first morning of his reign.

"And see, that sun himself!—on wings
Of glory, up the east he springs.
Angel of light! who from the time
These heavens began their march sublime,
Hath first of all the starry choir
Trod in his Maker's steps of fire.
Where are the days, thou wondrous sphere,
When Iran, like a sun-flower turned
To meet that eye, where'er it turned?
When from the groves of Bendemeer
To the nut-groves of Sarmacand,
Thy temples flamed o'er all the land.
Where are they? Ask the shades of them
Who on Cadessia's bloody plain,
Saw fierce invaders pluck the gem

From Iran's broken diadem,
And bind her ancient faith in chains,
And the poor exile, cast alone
On foreign shores, unloved, unknown,
Beyond the Caspian's iron gates.
Or in the snowy Mossian mountains,
Far from his beauteous land of dates
Her jasmine bowers, and sunny fountains!
Yet happier so than if he trod
His own beloved but blighted sod,
Beneath a despot stranger's nod!
Oh! he would rather homeless roam
Where freedom and his God may lead,
Than be the sleekest slave at home
That crouches to the conqueror creed!
Is Iran's pride then gone forever,
Quenched with the flames in Mithra's caves?
No—she has sons that never, never,
Will stoop to be the Moslem's slaves,
While heaven has light, or earth has graves.
Spirits of fire, that brood not long,
But flash resentment back for wrong,
And hearts, where slow, but deep, the seeds
Of vengeance ripen into deeds,
Till in some treacherous hour of calm
They burst, like Zeilan's giant palm,
Whose buds fly open with a sound
That shakes the pigmy forests round.
"Yea Enir, he who scaled thy tower,
Is one of many, brave as he,
Who loathe thy haughty race and thee,
Who, tho' they know the strife is vain,
Who, tho' they know the riven chain
Snaps, but to enter in the heart
Of him who rends its links apart,
Yet dare the issue, blest to be
Even for one bleeding moment, free,
And die in pangs of liberty!
Yet here, even here, a sacred band,
Ay, in the portal of that land
Thou, Arab, dar'st to call thine own,
Their spears across thy path have thrown;
Here, ere the winds half winged thee o'er,
Rebellion braved thee from the shore.

"Rebellion! foul dishonoring word,
Whose wrongful blight so oft hath stained
The holiest cause that tongue or sword
Of mortal ever lost or gained;
How many a spirit, born to bless,
Hath sunk beneath that withering name
Whom but a day, or hour's success,
Had lifted to eternal fame!"

Moore was so popular in his own time that it is not strange there has been a change in the feeling towards him and a disposition now-a-days to think of him only as a poet of light fancies, rather fit for youth. But this is not altogether just. Besides his fancy and grace, he has much genuine feeling whenever his heart speaks, and his verse is so musical and flowing, that it must always place him in a high rank as a poet. He worked conscientiously and did a great deal of work. Besides many poems which I have not mentioned, he wrote several prose works of fiction, biography, and kept faithfully his own Memoirs, which are very entertaining gossip of the times.

TALK LIV.

On Sir Walter Scott and Lord Byron.

It is of Walter Scott as poet of whom I mean to speak here; Walter Scott as novelist, I shall consider later. Scott is the first poet whose name meets us as we cross the threshold of our own century. He published the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* in 1805. His first attempt at verse had been his translation of some ballads from the old English. He was always very fond of ballads and it is thought that much reading of Percy's Reliques when a boy tended to make him a poet.

Born 1771. Died 1832.

The *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which was a weird sort of story in rhyme told by an old border minstrel, made

Scott known as a poet and gained him admiring readers everywhere. We are sure that the critics who praised it, some of them the very men who had abused Coleridge and Wordsworth, never would have seen the merit of Scott so clearly if the writings of the Lake School had not opened their minds and made them more hospitable to what was new. In that half-finished poem of Christabel, which Coleridge's mental indolence prevented him from finishing, Scott saw how effective such a meter might be made in a tale in verse, and set his Minstrel's Lay to a similar tune.

His poems followed each other quickly—*Marmion*, *The Lady of the Lake*, *The Vision of Roderick*, and others—till about 1817, when he ceased to write poetry. He had found a new gift in himself, and it is as Scott the novelist that he will be known longest and best. His poetry is vigorous, always pure and wholesome like a breeze from his own Highlands. He is best in strong scenes, in battle descriptions, or in rough hand-to-hand encounters between sturdy foes. In the battle in *Marmion*, or in the description of the fight on the banks of Bannock, in *The Lord of the Isles*, which I will give you here, you get an idea of his strength in such scenes:

THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.*

"Now onward and in open view,
The countless ranks of England drew;
Dark, rolling, like the ocean-tide
When the rough west hath chafed his pride,
And his deep roar sends challenge wide
  To all that bars his way!
In front the gallant archers trod;
The men at arms behind them rode,
And midmost of their phalanx broad,
  The monarch held his sway.
Beside him many a war-horse fumes,
Around him waves a sea of plumes,
Where many a knight in battle known,

*The battle of Bannockburn, fought June 25, 1314, between English and Scotch. English under Edward II; Scotch under Bruce.

And some who spurs had first braced on,
And deemed that fight should see them won?
  King Edward's hests obey.
De Argentine attends his side,
With stout De Valence, Pembroke's pride;
Selected champions from the train
To wait upon his bridle rein.
Upon the Scottish foe he gazed—
At once, before his sight amazed,
  Sunk banner, spear and shield.
Each weapon-point is downward sent;
Each warrior to the ground is bent.
'The rebels, Argentine, repent!
For pardon they have kneeled.'
'Aye, but they bend to other powers,
And other pardon seek than ours.
See where yon bare-foot Abbot stands
And blesses them with lifted hands.
Upon the spot where they have kneeled,
These men will die or win the field.'
'Then prove me, if they die or win,
Bid Gloster's earl the fight begin.'

"Earl Gilbert waved his truncheon high,
  Just as the northern ranks arose,
Signal for England's archery
  To halt and bend their bows.
Then stepped each yoeman forth apace,
Glanced at the intervening space,
  And raised his left hand high;
To the right ear the cords they bring,
At once ten thousand bow-strings ring,
  Ten thousand arrows fly!
Nor paused on the devoted Scott
The ceaseless fury of their shot.
  As fiercely and as fast,
Forth whistling came the grey-goose wing,
As the wild hailstones pelt and ring
  Adown December's blast.
Nor mountain targe of tough bull-hide,
Nor lowland mail, that storm may bide.
Woe! woe! to Scotland's bannered pride,
  If the fell shower may last!

Upon the right, behind the wood,
Each by his steed dismounted, stood
  The Scottish chivalry:
With foot in stirrup, hand on mane.
Fierce Edward Bruce can scarce restrain
His own keen heart, his eager train,
Until the archers gained the plain.
  Then—'Mount ye gallants free!'
He cried; and vaulting from the ground,
His saddle every horseman found.
On high their glittering crests they toss,
As springs the wild-fire from the moss;
The shields hang down from every breast,
Each ready lance is in the rest,
  And loud shouts Edward Bruce—
'Forth, Marshal! on the peasant foe,
We 'll tame the terrors of their bow,
  And cut the bow-string loose.'

"Then spurs were dashed in chargers' flanks,
They rushed among the archer-ranks,
No spears were there the shock to let,
No stakes to turn the charge were set;
And how shall yeoman's armor slight
Stand the long lance and mace of might?
Or what may their short swords avail
'Gainst barbed horse and coat of mail?
Amid their ranks the chargers spring,
High o'er their head the weapons swing;
And shriek and groan and vengeful shout
Gave note of triumph and of rout!
Awhile, with stubborn hardihood,
The English hearts the strife made good.
Borne down at length on every side,
Compelled to flight, they scatter wide.—
Let stags of Sherwood leap for glee,
And bound the deer of Dallom-Lee.
The broken bow of Bannock's shore
Shall in the greenwood ring no more!
Round Wakefield's merry Maypole now,
The maids may twine the summer bough;
May northward look with loving glance
For those that wont to lead the dance,

For the blithe archers look in vain!
Broken, dispersed, in flight o'er ta'en,
Pierced through, trod down, by thousands slain,
They cumber Bannock's bloody plain.'

Scott was a warm patriot, and his poems have constantly occurring lines which speak his love of country—his dear native Scotland. You all must know, I think, those familiar lines beginning,

"Lives there a man with soul so dead;
Who never to himself has said,
This is my own, my native land?"

which open a canto of the *Lay of the Last Minstrel.*

Another extract from *Lady of the Lake* has this address to his country's harp, which you can compare with Moore's song to the harp of his native land, which we have before read:

"Harp of the North, farewell! the hills grow dark,
On purple peaks a deeper shade descending;
In twilight copse the glow-worm lights her spark,
The deer, half-seen, are to the covert wending.
Resume thy wizard elm! the fountain lending
And the wild breeze thy wilder minstrelsy,
Thy numbers sweet with nature's vespers blending,
With distant echoes from the fold and lea,
And herd-boy's evening pipe, and hum of housing bee.

"Yet once again, farewell, thou minstrel harp.
Yet once again, forgive my feeble sway,
And little reck I of the censure sharp,
May idle cavil at an idle lay.
Much have I owed thy strains on life's long way;
Through secret woes the world has never known,
When on the weary night dawned wearier day,
And bitterer was the grief devoured alone,
That I survive such woes, Enchantress, is thine own.

"Hark! as my lingering footsteps slow retire,
Some spirit of the air has waked thy string!
'Tis now a seraph bold, with touch of fire,
'Tis now the brush of Fairy's frolic wing.
Receding now the dying numbers ring

Fainter and fainter down the rugged dell:
And now the mountain breezes scarcely bring
A wandering witch-note of the distant spell—
And now 'tis silent all! Enchantress, fare-thee-well!"

Two years after the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* appeared and was read with such delight, a little volume called *Hours of Idleness*, by George Gordon Byron, a young nobleman of nineteen, was reviewed in one of the magazines with terrible criticism. Mr. Jeffrey, the editor of the Edinburgh *Review*, the same critic who had lashed with his pen the poets of the Lake School, now attacked this budding poet. It is true, that the *Hours of Idleness* was not a collection of master-pieces of poetry, but there was enough of the promise of the genius which Byron showed afterwards, to make us feel indignant that Jeffrey could not have been more generous to the young writer. If Byron had been too sensitive to rally from the attack, his genius might have been crushed by such severity. But he was not a man to sit down in silence and take abuse, and had a strong tendency to hit back again. He answered Jeffrey in a satire in verse called *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, which was so strong that nobody could doubt the ability of the man who wrote it.

Born 1788. Died 1824.

In this satire he was himself severe on the Lake Poets, gave Walter Scott some hard knocks, and praised Campbell, Crabbe and Rogers, as the poets of the old classic school of Pope, whom Byron fancied he thought the great poet. In spite of all this, Byron belonged by temper and genius to the new school of poets, and was much more revolutionary in temper than any of them.

In all he wrote one sees he was a child of the age in which the French Revolution had raged. The tempests in his poetry would have torn to tatters the orderly verses of Mr. Pope, or any of the others whom Byron praised so highly.

After his tilt with the bards and reviewers, he went to Italy and there wrote the first part of *Childe Harold*—his best poem. When he went to see his London publisher, on

is return from Italy, he showed him some translations from he Latin poet Horace, as the great occupation of his abence, the work of which he was justly proud. The pubsher, rather disappointed at this, asked if he had nothing riginal, on which he rather unwillingly produced the first antos of *Childe Harold.* The quick eye of the business nan saw its merit; it was printed at once, and Byron says, "I awoke one morning and found myself famous." There vas no doubt in the mind of critics of the old or new order bout such poetry as this:

"Clear, placid Leman! thy contrasted lake,
With the wild world I dwelt in, is a thing
Which warns me with its stillness, to forsake
Earth's troubled waters for a purer spring.
This quiet sail is as a noiseless wing
To waft me from distraction; once I loved
Torn ocean's roar, but thy soft murmuring
Sounds sweet as if a sister's voice reproved
That I, with stern delights, should e'er have been so moved.

"It is the hush of night, and all between
Thy margin and the mountains, dusk, yet clear,
Mellowed and mingling, yet distinctly seen,
Save darkened Jura, whose capped heights appear
Precipitously steep; and, drawing near,
There breathes a living fragrance from the shore
Of flowers yet fresh with childhood; on the ear
Drops the light drip of the suspended oar,
Or chirps the grasshopper one good-night carol more.

"He is an evening reveller, who makes
His life an infancy and, sings his fill;
At intervals some bird from out the brake
Starts into voice a moment, then is still;
There seems a floating whisper on the hill;
But that is fancy, for the starlight dews
All silently their tears of love distil,
Weeping themselves away, till they infuse
Deep into nature's breast the spirit of her hues.

"Ye stars! which are the poetry of heaven,
If in your bright leaves we would read the fate
Of men and empires—'tis to be forgiven

That in our aspirations to be great,
Our destinies o'erleap their mortal state
And claim a kindred with you, for ye are
A beauty and a mystery, and create
In us such love and reverence from afar,
That fortune, fame, power, life, have named themselves a star.

"All heaven and earth are still—though not in sleep,
But breathless, as we grow when feeling most;
And silent, as we stand in thoughts too deep;—
All heaven and earth are still; from the high host
Of stars, to the lulled lake and mountain coast,
All is concentrated in a life intense,
Where not a beam, nor air, nor leaf, is lost
But hath a part of being and a sense
Of that which is of all Creator and defense.

"Then stirs the feeling infinite, so felt
In solitude, where we are least alone;
A truth which through our being then doth melt,
And purifies from self; it is a tone,
The soul and source of music, which makes known
Eternal harmony, and sheds a charm
Like to the fabled Cytherea's zone,
Binding all things with beauty; 'twould disarm
The spectre death, had he substantial power to harm.

* * * * * * * *

"The sky is changed! and such a change! Oh, night,
And storm and darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along,
From peak to peak, the rattling crags
Among, leaps the live thunder! not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers, through her misty shroud
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

* * * * * * * *

"Sky, mountains, river, winds, lake, lightnings! ye
With night, and clouds, and thunder, and a soul
To make these felt and feeling, well may be
Things that have made me watchful. The far roll
Of your departing voices is the knell
Of what in me is sleepless—if I rest.
But where of ye, oh tempests! is the goal?

Are ye like those within the human breast?
Or do ye find, at last, like eagles, some high nest?

"Could I embody and unbosom now
That which is most within me,—could I wreak
My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe—into one word,
And that one word were Lightning, I would speak—
But as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword.

"The morn is up again; the dewy morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing the clouds away in playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb—
And, glowing into day; we may resume
The march of our existence; and thus I
Still on thy shores, fair Leman! may find room
And food for meditation, nor pass by
Much that may give us pause, if pondered fittingly."

This magnificent handling of nature, this description of the breathless lull before the storm, the burst of the clouds on Jura's head, the passionate invocation to lake, river and mountain—all these, beside the poetry of the eighteenth century were like a real thunder storm beside a storm in a theatre.

Before Byron finished *Childe Harold*, he wrote a number of stories in verse—*Lara*, *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos*, *The Corsair*. These stories, nearly all with a hero who lived in revolt against law and order, were accepted as pictures of the poet's own stormy nature. Already, in respectable English circles, there was much horror felt at this strange, original spirit, so lawless and reckless, and he made foes as well as friends by his poetry.

Going back to Italy a second time, he finished *Childe Harold*, and in his later years wrote several dramatic works—*Werner*, *Sardanapalus*, *Cain*, *The Deformed Transformed*, are among the best. This was dramatic poetry, but not

dramas in the sense of works fit for the action of the stage.

His shorter or lyric poems do not match the longer ones in merit. His wings had a wide sweep, and he wanted plenty of room for his flights. The lyric poem was not his forte. His best short poems are to be found among some songs he wrote to Hebrew melodies. Here is one of the most familiar—a grand piece of word melody:

THE DESTRUCTION OF SENNACHERIB.

"The Assyrian came down like a wolf on the fold,
And his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold;
And the sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

"Like the leaves of the forest when summer is green,
The host with their banners at sunset were seen;
Like the leaves of the forest when autumn hath blown,
The host on the morrow lay withered and strown.

"For the Angel of Death spread his wings on the blast,
And breathed on the face of the foe as he passed,
And the eyes of the sleepers waxed deadly and chill
And their hearts but once heaved, then forever grew still.

"And there lay the steed with his nostril all wide,
But through it there rolled not the breath of his pride,
And the foam of his gasping lay wide on the turf,
And cold as the spray of the rock-beating surf.

"And there lay the rider distorted and pale,
With the dew on his brow and the rust on his mail;
And the tents were all silent, the banners alone,
The lances unlifted, the trumpets unblown.

"And the widows of Ashur are loud in their wail,
And the idols are broke in the temple of Baal;
And the weight of the Gentile, unsmote by the sword,
Hath melted like snow in the glance of the Lord."

There have been few poets who could handle language with Byron's ease and power. His rhyming is a marvel of facility. He wrote with a pen that seemed as free as the lightning, and his thoughts never seemed to feel the bonds of rhyme.

In his poetry, Byron warmly took the cause of Greece, which was then making an effort to free herself from the Turks. In *Childe Harold*, and in other poems, some grand passages are addressed to struggling Greece. The year before his death he entered into the plans of the Greek leaders in a war for their country's independence, and went to live at Missolonghi, where he mustered a band of soldiers in his own pay. Overwork, and the bad climate, threw him into a fever, and he was urged to leave the air of Missolonghi, which was malarious, and go elsewhere to recover. He refused, saying he would remain till Greece was either free or hopelessly subdued. He died soon after, at his post there, in the prime of life and genius. He used to say he had up to that time written only for women; in the last of his life he would write for *men*. Would he had been spared to do even greater things than *Childe Harold*.

TALK LV.

On Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Between Byron and Percy Bysshe Shelley, who were personal friends, there is a kind of resemblance in their lives, although they were men very unlike in character. They were both of noble birth, both held opinions very different from most young men in their position, and they won a similar reputation in their social circle, where their characters and their poetry were looked on by the conservative portion as dangerous and grossly immoral.

Born 1792.
Died 1822.

Shelley had first drawn blame on himself in college, when he was barely twenty, by some publication which was condemned as atheistic; and he was expelled, finally, from Oxford. Much that he did later, confirmed the bad character this gave him in the eyes of respectable and well-

ordered English society, which, like Byron, he seemed bound to set at defiance.

In character Shelley was a noble, pure man. The conduct for which he was blamed sprang from his own highest ideal of right. His mind had early formed radically different theories from those of most men of his class. Born of the aristocracy, he was an extreme democrat; in religious and social ideas, he was a free-thinker. Apart from his opinions he was a shy, scholarly man, inclined to immerse himself in books, unselfish, full of humanity, and as keenly sensitive as his own Sensitive Plant, to all the abuses and distresses in the world, eager to make the world better at any cost. Byron said of him after his death: "He was without exception the best and least selfish man I ever knew."

He began to write very early. When he was fifteen he had completed two novels. In college he began his poem of *Queen Mab*, which was condemned as an atheistic production, and after leaving college, his works followed each other rapidly. Although he died at thirty, he had written a good deal of prose, and tried his hand at all forms of poetic composition—dramas, lyrics, blank verse, narrative poems, and several poems in the Spenserian stanza, which seems to have been a favorite form with him.

In 1817 he went to Italy and never returned to England. He had written *Alastor*, or *The Spirit of Solitude*, and *The Revolt of Islam*, before his departure; his other works, except a few shorter poems, belong to the five years in which he lived in Italy.

Among his dramas, *Prometheus Unbound*—a tragedy following the Greek models and with a Greek subject—was one of the first things written in Italy, during a residence at Rome. Afterwards he went to live near Lord Byron, at Pisa, and here his mind and sympathies were so taken hold of by the sad story of *Beatrice Cenci*, that he wrote on it his tragedy, *The Cenci*. It is the most painful and powerful drama since the days of John Webster and Philip Mas-

singer, and it would be, if the plot were not too revolting, a strong acting play.

In *Julian and Maddalo*, Shelley put the characters of Byron and himself into a poem. At nearly the same time that this was written, he wrote also his lament for Keats under the title of *Adonais*.

All of Shelley's poetry is imaginative in the highest degree—an imagination governed by high intellect. Of all the later poets he seems to me most of all a poet for other poets. No one who has not the imaginative quality in a rare degree can fully understand and appreciate Shelley. He also had the gift of writing verse of most musical quality, which seemed to flow without effort. Some critic says, "his poetry seems not to have been an art, but an inspiration." *

This musical quality shows most of all in his lyrics; he wrote a great many of these; some long, others only a verse or two. I think there is no lyric of equal length in our language which is so perfect as Shelley's *Ode to a Skylark*. It is exquisite in melody, the first requirement of a lyric; the images it contains are poetic in the highest degree; and it is full of an aspiration that upbears the thoughts, as if borne aloft on the wings of the bird. Can anything be more musical than this?

"Sound of vernal showers
On the twinkling grass;
Rain-awakened flowers,
All that ever was
Joyous and clear and fresh, Thy music doth surpass."

Or more spirited than these:

"Higher still and higher,
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And, singing still dost soar, and soaring ever singest.

* Thomas Babington Macaulay.

"All the earth and air
With thy voice is loud
As, when night is bare,
From one lonely cloud,
The moon rains out her beams, and heaven is overflowed."

And see how without changing, the measure takes on deeper meaning:

"Waking or asleep,
Thou of death must deem
Things more true and deep
Than we mortals dream;
Or how could thy notes flow in such a crystal stream?

"We look before and after,
And pine for what is not;
Our sincerest laughter
With some pain is fraught;
Our sweetest songs are those that tell of saddest thought."

The Cloud is another lyric, less subtle in thought than *The Skylark*, but showing the wonderful music Shelley could make by the interlinking of words.

Among his poems of a fit length to quote, I have chosen the *Sensitive Plant*, because it seems to me a most characteristic poem: in its melody, in its imaginative quality, and in its very subject a poem in harmony with Shelley's own nature:

THE SENSITIVE PLANT.

PART I.

"A *sensitive plant* in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew;
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of night.

"And the spring arose on the garden fair,
Like the spirit of love felt everywhere,
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast,
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

"But none ever trembled and panted with bliss,
In the garden, the field or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless sensitive plant.

"The snow-drop and the violet
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odor, sent
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

"Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze in their eyes in the stream's recess,
'Till they die of their own dear loveliness;

"And the naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair, and passion so pale,
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

"And the hyacinth, purple, and white, and blue,
Which flings from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft and intense,
It was felt like an odor within the sense;

"And the rose, like a nymph to the bath addrest,
Who unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
'Till fold after fold, to the fainting air,
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare;

"And the wand-like lily, which lifted up
As a Mænad its moonlight colored cup,
Till the fiery star which is in its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on tender sky;

"And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tube-rose,
The sweetest flower for scent that blows,
And all rare blossoms from every clime,
Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

* * * * *

"And from this undefiled Paradise,
The flowers (as infants' awakening eyes
Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
Can first lull, and at last must awaken it).

"When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

"For each one was interpenetrated
With the light and odor its neighbor shed:
Like young lovers, whom youth and love make dear,
Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

"But the sensitive plant which could give small fruit
Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver—

"For the sensitive plant has no bright flower;
Radiance and odor are not in its dower;
It lives, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
It desires what it has not—the beautiful.

"The light winds which from unsustaining wings
Shed the music of many murmurings;
The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hue they bear afar;

"The plumed insects, swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odor, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass;

"The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

"The quivering vapors of dim moontide,
Which, like a sea, o'er the warm earth glide,
To which every sound, and odor and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream;

"Each and all, like ministering angels, were
For the sensitive plant sweet joy to bear,
While the lagging hours of the day went by,
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky.

"And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the earth was all rest and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep,

"The sensitive plant was the earliest
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favorite,
Cradled within the embrace of night."

PART II.

"There was a power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden ; a ruling grace,
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

"A lady, the wonder of her kind,
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind,
Which, dilating, had moulded her mein and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

"Tended the garden from morn to even;
And the meteors of that sublunar heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when night walks forth,
Laughed around her footsteps up from the earth.

"She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath, and her flushing face
Told, while the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than paradise;

"As if some bright spirit, for her sweet sake,
Had deserted heaven while the stars were awake;
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

"Her step seemed to pity the grass it prest;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

"And wherever her airy footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark-green deep.

"I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet,
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

"She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam,
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder showers.

"She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier bands;
If the flowers had been her own infants she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

"And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore in a basket of Indian woof
Into the rough woods far aloof,

"In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull,
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

"And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging around the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

"This fairest creature from earliest spring,
Thus moved through the garden, ministering
All the sweet season of summer-tide,
And, ere the first leaf looked brown, she died!

PART III.

"Three days the flowers of the garden fair
Like the stars, when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiæ, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

"And on the fourth the sensitive plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant;
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low.

"The dark grass, and the flowers amid the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

"The garden once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had once been its soul;
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

"Swift summer into the autumn flowed,
And frost in the midst of the morning rode,
Though the noon-day sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

"The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below;
The lilies were drooping, and white and wan
Like the head and skin of a dying man.

"Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks,
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers,
Massed into ruin, and all sweet flowers.

"Between the time of the wind and the snow,
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snakes' belly, and the toad's back;

"And plants at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth;
Prickly and pulpous, and blistering and blue,
Lurid and starred with a lurid dew.

"Spawn weeds and filth; a lep'rous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb;
And at its outlet, flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots—knotted like water-snakes.

"And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapors arose which have strength to kill;
At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt—
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

"The sensitive plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

"For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon,
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap sank to the root through every pore,
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

"For Winter came; the wind was his whip;
One choppy finger was on his lip;
He had torn the cataracts from the hills,
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles.

"His breath was a chain, which, without a sound,
The earth, and the air, and the water, bound;
He came fiercely down in his chariot-throne;
By the ten-fold blasts of the Arctic zone.

"Then the weeds, which were forms of living death,
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath;
Their decay, and sudden flight from frost,
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost.

"And under the roots of the sensitive plant,
The moles and the dormice died for want;
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air,
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

"When winter had gone and spring came back,
The sensitive plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toad-stools, and docks and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.'

In Pisa Shelley's best poems were written—*The Cenci*, *Helas*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, *The Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, and nearly all the shorter poems of which I have spoken. The last thing he ever wrote was *The Triumph of Time*, which was left unfinished, and was published by his wife in as perfect a shape as she could bring it from his scattered papers.

In the spring of 1822 Shelley left Pisa and took a house on the west coast of Italy, near the village of Lerici. He was very fond of the sea, and had ordered a yacht built, in which he and a warm friend, Capt. Williams, were going to spend many a day on the blue Italian waters, close at hand. On the sixteenth of May the yacht arrived. Shelley was as pleased with it as a boy with a long-wished for toy. They made several excursions in the boat, which was named *Don Juan* from Byron's poem, and finally came down to Leghorn in her. After a few days stay here, Shelley and Williams started back in the boat for the town of Spezzia, on the Gulf of Spezzia, not far from their home.

This was the last ever seen of them. A sudden sea-storm came shortly after they started, with a dense fog. The little

boat was probably run down by some larger vessel. After several days of waiting—terrible days for Mrs. Shelley and Mrs. Williams—the bodies were found washed up, wave-beaten and almost fleshless, on the shore. What was left of the two bodies was burnt on a funeral pile built on the sandy shore, and their ashes were buried in the cemetery in Florence. Byron was foremost in this strange burial rite, aided by Capt. Trelawney,* who was a friend of both the dead.

Thus, in the real opening of life, at the point where what was best in him seemed ready for fruition, Shelley died. Men of much less genius have gained a larger fame and held a higher place in the annals of literature. But, as he is one of the most poetic of poets, he will always be loved by those of his own guild; his thought will take deep root in the hearts of other poets, and serve for their inspiration. For himself, he died too young. The promise of his life was thwarted by his early death. Up to the time of his death he had been restless and unsettled in spirit. The seething waves of thought in his brain should have had time to cool and settle into tranquillity. Dying at thirty, he had not reached the serene heights where the poet ought to dwell. If he had lived longer, I feel sure time would have ripened him into a grand maturity; would have taught him trust and patience, and brought him to a calm which in his brief life he had not not reached.

TALK LVI.

On John Keats.

One of Shelley's most touching and beautiful poems is his *Adonais—The Lament for Keats.* I wish it were not too long for me to quote it all; I can only give you here a few verses:

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*A very interesting sketch of Shelley and Byron—called *Recollections of Shelley and Byron,* has been published by Capt. Trelawney.

"O weep for Adonais! The quick dreams,
The passion-winged ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not,
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain;
But droop there whence they sprung, and mourn their lot,
Round the cold heart, where after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

"One from a lucid urn of starry dew,
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them;
Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears, instead of pearls, begem;
Another in her willful grief would break
Her bow and winged reed, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak,
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

"Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it power to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music; the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flashed thro' his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

"All he had loved, and molded into thought,
Form, shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aerial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy thunder moaned;
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay;
And the wild-winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay."

The tenderness Shelley shows for Keats in this beautiful elegiac poem, which reminds me of Spenser's lament for Sidney, is made more touching by the fact that when Shelley's poor disfigured body was found washed up on the

beach at Via Reggio, one pocket of his jacket had a volume of Keats in it, doubled back, as if when death clutched the frail boat, the reader had hastily thrust away his book, in the middle of some favorite line.

John Keats' life is sad from first to last. He was born with the sensibility of a poet, which feels a hurt at every pore. He lost his mother, whom he loved most dearly, when a school boy; he was apprenticed to a surgeon at fifteen, and the boy who felt all sorts of fancies flowering in his mind and asking for expression, was kept for three years pounding drugs in a mortar and putting up his master's prescriptions. During this time he read the Fairy Queen—that treasure-house for younger poets—and spent his spare time in imitating the Spenserian stanza, or in writing verses after his own heart. When he was twenty-two he published his poem of *Endymion*, which the Reviews pounced upon with their usual savageness. The leading Reviews—the *Quarterly* and the *Edinburgh*, remind one in those days of the giant in Mother Goose's melodies. They seem to cry:

Born 1795.
Died 1820.

> "Fee! faw! fum!
> I smell the blood of a young poet.
> Be he alive or be he dead,
> In the street or in his bed,
> I must have some here in my can!"

On which they went to work and cut him up, heart's blood, bones and all, in the pages of their magazines. In Keats' case, the process of cutting up was fatal. He could not bear such treatment, or like Wordsworth, despise it, in serene faith in his own power. It is generally believed that this severe criticism was one cause of his death.

Nevertheless, in spite of the critics, Endymion was a great poem; a poem that in a short time the critics (who are generally very poor oracles till popular judgment comes to set them right) were obliged to pronounce great.

Keats' disappointment at the way his poem was treated was bitter, but it did not destroy his power to work. Al-

ready a blood-vessel had broken in his lungs, and signs of consumption began to show itself, but only two years later he published another volume, containing *Hyperion*, *Lamia Isabella*, *The Eve of St. Agnes*, and other poems. Among the shorter lyrics was that most exquisite Ode to a Nightingale :

"Thou wast not born for death, immortal bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown;
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears among the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn."

These were Keats' last works. His disease gained on him rapidly, and when only a little over twenty-five years, he died. But his life as a poet, was more rounded and complete than that of many older poets. I have not that feeling about his early death that I have for Shelley. Keats sang his songs and died, and they are so perfect in their way that we do not complain there are so few, nor feel that life could have added much to the richness of his genius. There are no signs of any conflicts in his spirit which needed to be outlived before he could write at his best, as in Shelley. His poetry is not a field on which ideas are at battle or theories are displayed. They are beautiful fancies, or old tales, woven into melodious, pictorial verses.

His poetry is the most perfect of word-painting. One can almost see colors in the printed lines of his *Endymion* or *Eve of St. Agnes*. No poet could better use words whose sound fits the meaning ; such words as *lush*, *murmurous*, and others, in which the poet speaks to the sense as well as the thought. No poet since Shakspeare was more an artist in the use of the adjective words which give vividness and color. For example—an "azure lidded sleep," the "poppied

warmth of sleep," "embalmed darkness," "the silver-snarling trumpet;" his poetry is full of such instances. He is, however, much more than a mere word-poet, and has seasons of strength in which one feels as if a breeze from John Milton had passed over his lines.

But melancholy is most of all the mark he set upon his poetry—a mark which has been copied by so many later versifiers, that it has seemed as if grief and pining were the poet's themes. In these later poets this is often affectation; in Keats it was genuine—the note struck by the sensitive spirit over whom hung the shadow of early death.

Before he died—and death was welcome as a release from pain and weariness of living—he said: "I can feel the daisies growing over me." And on his tomb he ordered inscribed: "*Here lies one whose name was written in water.*' False prophecy! Every year since his death has set him higher among the crowned poets of the world.

It is difficult to quote from Keats. He has written few short poems, and his longer poems will not bear taking by fragments. His *Eve of St. Agnes* is one of the most beautiful love-stories told in verse, in our language. I can only give you a few bits here and there, as it is too long to quote entire.

The story opens with a scene of revelry on *St. Agnes' Eve*, in which Madeline is the chief figure. Madeline's heart has brooded all day on the stories of St. Agnes' Eve; how maidens who did certain charms might have a vision, at night, of their true lovers, who would appear in a vision of their sleep, offering all dainties to eat:

> "If ceremonies due they did aright,
> As supperless to bed they must retire,
> And couch supine their beauty lily-white;
> Nor look behind, nor sideways; but require
> Of heaven, with lifted eyes, for all that they desire."

Meantime Madeline, gliding through the dance, while her thoughts are elsewhere, is watched by her young love,

Porphyro, with whose house her father and kinsfolk are at war, and who, at peril of his life, has stolen here, hoping only to get sight of Madeline.

The old nurse, Angela, who is the young lovers' only friend in all the hostile castle, tells him of Madeline's plan to try the charm of St. Agnes' Eve; and he persuades the dame to conceal him in Madeline's chamber, where, when she sleeps, he will spread at her bed-side the feast which the charm of St. Agnes' promises to her vision.

The dame hides him there and hobbles off, half afraid of what she has done, just as Madeline enters her chamber.

"Out went the taper as she hurried on;
Its little smoke in pallid moonshine died.
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air and visions wide.
No uttered syllable or woe betide;
But to her heart—her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side,
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die heart-stifled in her dell.

"A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imageries
Of fruits and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device
Innumerable, of stains and splendid dyes.

"As are the tiger-moth's deep damasked wings;
And in the midst 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded 'scutcheon blushed with blood of kings and queens.

"Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint;
She seemed a splendid angel, newly dressed,
Love wings, for heaven; Porphyro grew faint;
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

"Anon his heart revives; her vespers done,
Of all her wreathed pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant boddice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees.
Half-hidden like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile, she dreams awake and sees
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

"Soon trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of watchful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothed limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown like a thought until the morrow day,
Blissfully havened, both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray,
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut and be a bud again.

"Stolen to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness,
Which, when he heard, that minute did he bless
And breathed himself; then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wild wilderness.
And over the hushed carpet silent stept,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo! how fast she slept.

"Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim silvery twilight, soft he set
A table, and half-anguished threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold and jet.

* * * * * * * * * *

And still she slept, an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanched linen, smooth and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apples, quince and plum and gourd,
With jellies smoother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one
From silken Sarmacand to cedared Lebanon.

"These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes, and in baskets bright
Of wreathed silver; sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light—

* * * * * * * *

Awakening up he took her hollow lute,
Tumultuous, and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called, '*La belle dame sans mercy!*'
Close to her ear, touching the melody—
Wherewith disturbed she uttered a soft moan,
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayed eyes wide open shone.
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth sculptured stone.

"Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep;
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep—

* * * * * * * *

'Ah! Porphyro,' she said, 'but even now
Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
Made tunable with every sweetest vow,
And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear;
How changed thou art! how pallid, chill and drear!
Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
O leave me not in this eternal woe,
For if thou diest, my love, I know not where to go.'

"'My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
Thy beauty's shield, heart shaped and vermeil-dyed?
Ah! silver shrine here will I take my rest
After so many hours of toil and quest,
A famished pilgrim—saved by miracle.
Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest,
Saving of thy sweet self, if thou think'st it well
To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"'Hark! 'tis a elfin storm from fairy land
Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed;
Arise! arise! the morning is at hand;—

The bloated wassailers will never heed ;
Let us away, my love, with happy speed.
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see—
Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead,
Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
Far o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

"They glide like phantoms into the wide hall;
Like phantoms to the iron porch they glide,
Where lay the porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side;
The watchful bloodhound rose, and shook his side,
But his sagacious eye, an inmate owns;
And one by one, the bolts full easy slide—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

"And they are gone; aye! ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm;
That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior guests with shade and form
Of witch and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be night-mared. Angela, the old,
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand aves told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold."

With Keats, who died in 1820, we enter upon the fair field of modern poetry, and find ourselves among the poets of our own age and our forms of thought. One of the best living critics* has said:

"Three men, almost contemporaneous with each other—Wordsworth, Keats and Byron—were the great means of bringing back English poetry from the sandy deserts of rhetoric, and recovering for her her triple inheritance of simplicity, sensuosness, and passion. Of these three, Wordsworth was the only conscious reformer and the deepest thinker; Keats, the most essentially a poet; and Byron, the most keenly intellectual of the three. * * Wordsworth has influenced most the ideas of succeeding poets; Keats their forms; and Byron, interesting to men of imagination, less for his writing than for what his writings indicate, reappears no more in poetry, but presents an ideal to youth made restless by vague desires not yet regulated by experience, nor supplied with motives by the duties of life."

*James Russell Lowell.

TALK LVII.

On Some Friends of the Lake Poets.

There are many interesting writers in prose as well as in verse, who wrote at the time the Lake School was rising to fame. They are worth better and longer mention than I can give in one brief talk. The early part of this century saw gathered in London a group of men more interesting than any similar group since the days when the Scriblerus Club used to meet at Will's Coffee House.

Charles Lamb, one of the sweetest and gentlest characters that the past keeps alive for us, was a school-mate of Coleridge in Christ's Hospital School, and they formed a friendship there which was never broken. Lamb was a man of varied talents. He wrote poems and one or two plays; but his merit as a writer is shown best in his *Essays of Elia*, which are full of a quaint humor, and have a pathos entirely their own. No essays so fresh, delicate and original had been written since the time of Abraham Cowley as these of Lamb, and I think I should rather part with Cowley even, than with the gentle *Elia*.

Born 1775.
Died 1835.

Lamb was a true Londoner, born and dwelling in or near that great city all his life, and loving it as if it were a feeling and responsive being, conscious of his love. He went to visit Wordsworth once, and enjoyed the beautiful lake and mountain region among which his friend lived; but his heart was always in London. In one of his letters to Wordsworth he says:

"Separate from the pleasure of your company, I don't much care if I never see a mountain in my life. I have passed all my days in London, until I have formed as many and as intense local attachments as any of your mountaineers can with dead nature. The lighted shops of the Strand and Fleet street, the innumerable trades, tradesmen and customers, coaches, wagons, play houses—all the bustle and

wickedness about Covent Garden, the watchmen, drunken scenes, the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon houses and pavements, the print shops, old book-stalls, the soup-kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind, and feed me without power of satiety. The wonder of the sights impels me into night-walks about the city's crowded streets, and I often shed tears on the motley Strand from fullness of joy at so much life."

Dr. Johnson also loved London as Lamb did, and preferred it to all the nature outside.

Lamb held for years a place as clerk in the India House, and his slight, stooping figure, clad in clerkly black, coming down Fleet street to his lodgings in the Temple, where he lived many years, is one of the most vivid pictures in my imagination. His sister Mary, who is the Bridget of his essays, was his housekeeper. She was subject to fits of insanity, and he devoted his life to unfailing care of her—a care repaid on her part by tenderest gratitude and love. When these melancholy attacks were over, she was a clever woman and charming companion.

When Lamb was about fifty, he was pensioned by the India House where he had so long been a clerk, and for the rest of his days he lived in freedom. One must read his own account of his delight at his emancipation, in his letters to friends, to see how keen and boyish was his enjoyment of the liberation from his daily drudgery.

The *Essays of Elia* are delightful reading. Their humor is so quaint, and yet so tender, that in reading them one often laughs with tears in the eyes.

One series in the essays on Popular Fallacies: *That handsome is that handsome does. That a man never should laugh at his own jokes. That illgotten gains never prosper. That we must rise with the lark*—are in Lamb's wittiest vein.

I quote for you from his *Essays of Elia* the greater part of his amusing dissertation upon *Roast Pig*:

"Mankind, says a Chinese manuscript, which my friend Mr. —— was obliging enough to read and explain to me—for the first seventy

thousand ages—ate their meat raw, clawing it or biting it from the living animal just as they do in Abyssinia to this day. The period is not obscurely hinted at by their great Confucius, where he designates a kind of golden age, by the term *cho-fang*, literally, the Cooks' Holiday. The manuscript goes to say, that the art of roasting or rather broiling (which I take to be the elder brother) was accidentally discovered in the manner following. The Swine-herd Ho-ti, having gone out into the woods one morning, as his manner was, to collect mast for his hogs, left his cottage in the care of his eldest son Bo-bo, a great lubberly boy, who being fond of playing with fire, as younkers of his age commonly are, let some sparks escape into a bundle of straw, which in kindling quickly spread a conflagration over every part of their poor mansion, till it was reduced to ashes. Together with the cottage, (a very antediluvian make-shift of a building you may think it) what was of much more importance, a fine litter of new-farrowed pigs, no less than nine in number, perished. China pigs have been esteemed a luxury all over the East, from the remotest period that we read of. Bo-bo was in the utmost consternation, as you may think—not so much for the sake of the tenement, which his father and he could easily build up again with a few dry branches, and the labor of an hour or so, at any time, but for the loss of the pigs. While he was thinking what he should say to his father, and wringing his hands over the smoking remnants of one of those untimely sufferers, an odor assailed his nostrils unlike any scent which he had before experienced. What could it proceed from? not from the burnt cottage—he had smelt that smell before—indeed, this was by no means the first accident of the kind which had occurred through the negligence of this unlucky young fire-brand. Much less did it resemble that of any known herb or weed or flower. A premonitory moistening at the same time overflowed his nether lip. He knew not what to think. He next, stooped down to feel the pig to see if there were any signs of life in it. He burnt his fingers, and to cool them applied them in his booby fashion to his mouth. Some of the crumbs of the scorched skin had come away with his fingers, and for the first time in his life (in the world's life indeed, for before him no man had known it), he had tasted—crackling ! *

"Again he felt the pig. It did not burn him so much now, still he licked his fingers from a sort of habit. The truth at length broke into his slow understanding, that it was the pig that smelt so and tasted so delicious; and surrendering himself to the new-born pleasure, he fell to tearing up whole handfuls of the scorched skin, with the flesh next it, and was cramming it down his throat in his beastly

* Crackling, the rind of roasted pork.

fashion when his sire entered among the smoking rafters, armed with retributory cudgel, and finding how affairs stood, began to rain blows upon the young rogue's shoulders, as thick as hailstones, which Bo-bo heeded not any more than if they had been flies. The tickling pleasure which he experienced in his lower regions, had rendered him quite callous to any inconveniences he might feel in those remote quarters. His father might lay on, but he could not beat him from his pig, till he had fairly made an end of it, when, becoming a little more sensible of his situation, something like the following dialogue ensued:

"You graceless whelp, what have you got there devouring! Is it not enough that you have burned me down three houses with your dog's tricks; and be hanged to you, but you must be eating fire, and I know not what; what have you got there, I say?"

"O, father, the pig! the pig! Do come and taste how nice the burnt pig tastes!"

"The ears of Ho-ti tingled with horror. He cursed his son, and he cursed himself that ever he should beget a son that should eat burnt pig.

"Bo-bo, whose scent was wonderfully sharpened since morning, soon raked out another pig; and fairly rending it asunder, thrust the lesser half by main force into the fists of Ho-ti, shouting out, "Eat! eat, eat the burnt pig! father, only taste!" with such like ejaculations; cramming all the while as if he would choke.

"Ho-ti trembled in every joint while he grasped the abominable thing; wavering whether he should not put his son to death for an unnatural young monster, when the crackling, scorching his fingers as it had done his son's, and applying the same remedy to them, he in his turn, tasted some of its flavor; which, make what sour mouths he would for a pretense, proved not altogether unpleasing to him.

In conclusion (for the manuscript here is a little tedious), both father and son fairly sat down to the mess, and never left off till they dispatched all that remained of the litter.

"Bo-bo was strictly enjoined not to let the secret escape, for the neighbors would certainly have stoned them for a couple of abominable wretches. Who could think of improving upon the good meat which God had sent them? Nevertheless, strange stories got about. It was observed that Ho-ti's house was burned down more frequently than ever. Nothing but fires from this time forward. Some would break out in broad day, others in the night-time. As often as the sow farrowed, so sure was the house of Ho-ti to be in a blaze; and Ho-ti himself, which was the more remarkable, instead of chastising his son, seemed to grow more fond of him than ever. At length they

were watched; the terrible mystery discovered, and father and son summoned to take their trial at Pekin, then an inconsiderable assize town. Evidence was given; the obnoxious food itself produced in court, and verdict about to be pronounced, when the foreman of the jury begged that some of the burnt pig, of which the culprits stood accused, should be handed into the box. He handled it, and they all handled it; and burning their fingers as Bo-bo and his father had done before, and nature prompting to each of them the same remedy; against the face of all the facts, and the clearest charge that judge had ever given, to the suprise of the whole court, townsfolk, strangers, reporters, and all present, without leaving the box, or any manner of consultation whatever, they brought in a simultaneous verdict of NOT GUILTY.

"The judge, who was a shrewd fellow, winked at the manifest iniquity of the decision; and when the court was dismissed, went privily, and bought up all the pigs which could be had for love or money. In a few days his lordship's town house was observed to be on fire. The thing took wing and now there was nothing to be seen but fire in every direction.

"Fuel and pigs grew enormously dear all over the district. The insurance offices, one and all, shut up shop. People built slighter and slighter every day, until it was feared that the very science of architecture would in no long time be lost to the world. Thus the custom of firing houses continued, till in process of time, says my manuscript, a sage arose, like our Locke, who made a discovery, that the flesh of swine, or indeed of any other animal, might be cooked (burnt, they called it) without the necessity of consuming a whole house to dress it. Then first began the rude form of gridiron—roasting by the string or spit came in a century or two later—I forget in whose dynasty. By such slow degrees, concludes the manuscript, do the most useful, and seemingly the most obvious arts make their way among mankind."

Born 1778. Died 1830.

A life-long friend of Lamb and an early admirer of Coleridge was William Hazlitt, also a writer of essays, and one of the best writers of his time. He had set out to be a painter when a young man, but his success did not satisfy him, and he dropped the brush for the pen. His knowledge of art helped him as critic, and his essays on Hogarth's pictures, on Joshua Reynolds, on Vandyke, are all admirable reading. In the drama he was hardly less good as a critic, and in literature best of all. He was a student, as was his friend Lamb, of the sixteenth century poets, and

a series of lectures which Hazlitt gave on the old poets of the Elizabethan Age, and on Shakspeare's plays, are well worth reading. He also wrote on *English comic writers* — the comic dramatists, Congreve, Wycherly, Vanbrugh and Farquhar—and beside all this critical work, he wrote a great many essays on all sorts of subjects, which are collected under the name of *Table Talks.*

It is not easy to quote from Hazlitt's essays without quoting at length. Yet he is rich in strong, epigrammatic sentences, as this from the essay on the *Immortality of Youth:* "No young man believes he shall ever die. There is a feeling of eternity in youth which makes amends for everything;" or this: "Perhaps the best cure for the fear of death is to reflect that life has a beginning as well as an end," or this grand sentence: "I can forgive the dirt and sweat of the gypsy under the hedge, when I consider the earth is his mother, the sun his father." Among his essays is a series on *Men of the Time*, in which he gives, among many others, sketches of Coleridge and of Wordsworth, which I advise you to read, although it is to be kept in mind that Hazlitt held all through life the liberal opinions which Coleridge and Wordsworth held only in youth, and that there was in Hazlitt a little bitterness at what seemed to him their desertion of a cause.

An essay not to be omitted in reading him, is *On my first acquaintance with poets*, in which he tells how, as a boy, he first met Coleridge, and describes the charm he held over him. And you must not miss another—*On persons one would wish to have seen*—an essay reporting a conversation on that subject, in which Hazlitt, Lamb, Leigh Hunt and others, took part. One feels quite sure that the conversation was held at Lamb's rooms in the Temple, on one of those charming evenings at which mirth and wit presided, and one wishes, after reading, that it were possible to have been present.

Indeed I do not know any of Hazlitt's essays which are not interesting, and for my own part, I wish life were long enough to permit me to read every word he has written.

Leigh Hunt was a friend of Hazlitt and Lamb, as well as of Byron and Shelley. He was a writer of poems. plays, stories, essays; his pen was tried in every kind of writing. He began early to edit a newspaper, *The Examiner*, and made a brilliant paper, but for a libel against the prince-regent, which it printed, he was imprisoned for two years. He made his room in the jail a bower of taste, painting the ceiling like the sky—cloud-covered; papering the walls in patterns of flowers; and with books, piano, statuary, and all sorts of bric-a-brac, made the visitors who came to see him feel as if they had entered a fairy-land. Here all the principal men of the time visited him—Byron, Moore, Hazlitt, Lamb, William Godwin, Shelley, and many others, till his cell seems like the meeting ground of the wits of that day.

Born 1784. Died 1859.

His works are too great in number even to mention the titles. Some of his shorter poems are very pretty; among them I am sure you will know the little fable of *Abou Ben Adhem*. One of his longest poems, *Rimini*, is on an Italian subject. He was very fond of Italy and her poets, and his translations from them, and tales derived from Ariosto, Tasso, and the other great poets, are among his best works. He was, like Hazlitt, a good critic of the drama and literature. He is a graceful writer, with so much enthusiasm for that which he likes in his favorite writers, that he makes his reader share his own pleasure in reading them.

His prose works, such as *A Book for a Corner*, *Imagination and Fancy*, and *Tales from the Italian Poets*, will outlive his reputation as a poet; and it is as prose-writer and journalist that we shall best remember him.

Walter Savage Landor, who was the friend of Wordsworth, Lamb, Coleridge, the life-long and intimate friend of Southey, was a man who outlived his associates and companions by almost a generation of time. He was born in 1775, and lived to be almost ninety.

Born 1775. Died 1864.

Like most of this group, he was poet and prose-writer both, his first works in poetry proving too subtle in meaning for the ordinary reader. He took up prose-writing in a style which, though still remote from common understandings, found much more appreciation than his poetry. But his works have always found warm admirers among poets and scholars. Shelley, Lamb, Hazlitt, all read his first poem, *Gebir*, with delight; Southey hailed him as a great poet, and showed for him an admiration which Landor returned with interest; and in an essay on *Poetry that Poets Love*, Miss Mitford places Landor's poetry at the head of the list.

Landor's admirers stretch down through the century into our own times. Dickens loved him with enthusiasm, and has given some touches of his character in Lawrence Boythorn, in the novel of Bleak House; while Ralph Waldo Emerson, who has recorded a visit to Landor's home in Italy, in the *English Traits*, says: "Year after year the scholar must go back to him for a multitude of elegant sentences; for a wisdom, wit and indignation which are unforgetable."

The best part of Landor's writing, indeed, is found in detached sentences in his prose, or short passages from his poetry. I think there are few writers in English whose works would furnish sentences for so large a book of aphorisms, as his.

He was very much in sympathy with the Greeks and Romans in his thought. A good deal of his poetry is written in Latin; and many of his characters, in prose especially, are Greeks, drawn to the life. Of all his works, the general reader would be most interested in the *Imaginary Conversations*, which embrace several series of conversations between the historic characters of the past: between Queen Elizabeth and Burleigh; Lady Jane Grey and Roger Ascham; Philip Sidney and Lord Brooke; Milton and Marvell. One of the most beautiful among all of these, is the *Pericles and Aspasia*, in which appear the wonderfully lifelike characters of Pericles, Aspasia, Anaxagoras, Alcibiades, and other noble Greeks of that time.

Landor had undoubted genius. A want of self-discipline seems to have hindered both his character and his work from coming to full perfection. It is a great deal to say of him that he is a poet for poets; it would be still better to be able to say that he touched the deep heart of humanity. One feels of him that he just missed a height he might have gained. And yet there are few books I would so unwillingly leave unread as *The Imaginary Conversation.*

Born 1786. Died 1859.

Thomas De Quincey, who is most famous for his *Confessions of an English Opium Eater*, belongs among these men of the Lake School. He lived for years among the lakes of Westmoreland, and after Wordsworth left his cottage at Grasmere to live at Rydal Mount, where the last of his life was passed, De Quincey took the Grasmere House, and lived there many years. In London his friends were, all of them, in the group of which I have just been speaking. Like Coleridge, he was many years an opium-eater, and his *Confessions* are tinged by the wonderful hues his fancy took on under the influence of this drug. There are passages from his prose which have few equals in the language for eloquence and imagination. And, notwithstanding the diseased state of mind which his habit of opium-eating induced, he did a great amount of work, and left behind him many volumes.

This group of men of varied talents were contemporaries of the new school of poetry, and upheld its doctrines. They were all writers for the current periodical literature of the time, and the prose-writing of each has a distinct originality. But the master among prose-writers of this time, the magician who cast his spell over his age, and over future times, is Walter Scott, whose historical novels form by themselves an epoch in English literature.

TALK LVIII.

On Walter Scott and the Waverley Novels.

From the time of Miss Burney's *Evelina*, in 1778, until the year 1814, I think it will be conceded that the best novels were written by women. Women had found their field and they held it well. Among the masculine contemporaries of Miss Edgeworth, Mrs. Radcliffe, Jane and Anna Maria Porter, and Miss Austen, were Matthew Lewis, whose lurid story, *The Monk*, followed in the track of Anne Radcliffe; Thomas Holcroft, the author both of plays and novels which gained popularity in their day; Charles Maturin, an Irish clergyman, who was the author of romantic and improbable fictions, and the tragedy of *Bertram;* William Beckford, who wrote the weird Eastern story of *Vathek*, a story to be classed in the group of fictions, among which Johnson's Rasselas belongs. But none of the works of these authors are equal in interest to those of Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen.

If there is any exception to the pre-eminence of the novels of this period written by women, over those of men, it should be given to William Godwin's *Caleb Williams*, which is to be noted not only as a popular novel, but as one of the first English fictions written for a purely philanthropic purpose. Godwin had written a work on *Political Justice*, before he wrote this novel, and no doubt saw he could reach more minds by a novel than by a philosophic argument. He was one of the first who used fiction to hold up to view social abuses and unjust laws, but he has had many followers, and a large part of the novelists of to-day have followed in Godwin's footsteps.

Born 1756. Died 1836.

Caleb Williams is a book which one ought to read who is interested in the growth of the English novel. It is a powerful book, and will hold the reader's interest from first to last. That it is dramatic is proved by the fact that a play-

writer of the time. George Coleman, founded on it his play of the *Iron Chest*, still an acting play.

These names of men and women which I have just mentioned, were the leading names in fiction when, in 1814, an anonymous novel called *Waverley* appeared, a novel whose authorship for years was a subject of doubt and curiosity. *Waverley* was only the first of a series known as the *Waverley Novels*, a series appearing at rapid intervals for sixteen years, till they numbered thirty-two novels;—all these tales founded on historical facts; swarming with historical characters drawn with all the lines of truth; and placed among scenery and surroundings which seemed to be accurate studies from nature and life. The scenes of these romances are laid in England, France, Germany, the lands of the East, to the very door of the holy sepulchre; in time they cover a period which begins at the close of the eleventh century, and comes down to the opening year of the nineteenth; in action they enter upon almost every great historic field, from the wars of the Crusades in Syria, to the more peaceful scenes of the reign of George III, in England. Such a work, so wonderful in its scope, so varied in place, time and action, was that of Walter Scott in The Waverley Novels.

The success of Byron, as a poet, probably turned Scott from a poet into a novelist. He printed his poem of *Rokeby* at the same time that Byron's *Giaour* appeared. Scott read the rival poem, whose popularity cast his own into the shade. When he laid down the book, he said, with the generosity which was natural to him—"Byron hits the mark where I don't even pretend to fledge my arrow."

Several years before this, Scott had begun the novel of *Waverley*, but had thrown it aside, and it was mislaid for years. About this time he found the manuscript in a drawer, and went to work to finish it. In the evenings of three weeks in summer, when he was busy during the day with other affairs, he completed his first novel.

John Lockhart, who was his son-in-law, and after Scott's death wrote his life, tells this story in the biography:

"A party of young men, who lived in Scott's neighborhood at the time he was finishing *Waverley*, were having a jovial dinner together. They had adjourned to the library from the dining-room, and one of them who sat opposite a large window which looked out upon the windows of an adjoining house, was observed to change in manner, and his whole face to become clouded and melancholy.

"'What is the matter?" said one of the party 'I fear you are not well?'

"'No,' he said, 'I shall be well enough presently, if you will only change seats with me, for there is a confounded *hand* in sight of me, which has often bothered me before, and now won't let me fill my glass with a good will.'

I rose to change places, and he pointed out this hand, which, like the writing on Balshazzar's wall, disturbed his hour of hilarity.

"'Since we sat down' he said, 'I've been watching it; it fascinates my eye; it never stops; page after page is finished and thrown on the heap of manuscript, and still it goes on; and so it will be till candles are brought in, and God knows how long after. It is the same every night. I can't stand the sight of it when not at my books.'

"'Some stupid clerk!' cried one of the party; No, said another, 'I know what hand it is—it is Walter Scott's!'"

This was the hand which wrote *Waverley* in the evenings of three weeks in summer.

The necessity of such constant work begun almost with Scott's literary career. Before he began his novels, he had entered into a secret partnership with his friend, James Ballantyne, the printer of all his books, and this firm was closely allied in interest to that of his publisher, Mr. Constable. The demands of these two firms for money seemed incredible, and they were finally the ruin of all concerned in them.

Scott himself had one pet extravagance—his beautiful estate of Abbotsford. To create and beautify this home was the dream of his life. He had begun by buying some land on which he intended to build a modest home, but by degrees more lands had been added, till the little estate grew into baronial acres, and the modest mansion became a castle. It

was an ideally beautiful place; as Miss Edgeworth said when she went from her home in Ireland to visit the author of Waverley: "Everything about you is exactly what one ought to have wit enough to dream." Here at Abbotsford the greater part of his novels were written, and here when worn-out by work and care, he died.

Scott's novels, of which I give a list elsewhere, have been latterly much crowded out of interest by the great number of novel-writers in all sorts of fields, who have succeeded him. It is hardly to be expected that in this busy age, so full of books, we should read every one of his stories. But there are at least half-a-dozen which we could not afford to leave unread. Each lover of Scott will have his favorites; I shall only give my preference when I name as the first half-dozen: *Ivanhoe*, *Quentin Durward*, *Kenilworth*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, *The Talisman*, and *The Heart of Mid Lothian*. There is always perhaps something of accident in these preferences, and those who only read those I have named, will miss many characters in these novels which have almost as much a place in the past as the characters of history. The spirited Di Vernon, in Rob Roy; poor Lucy Ashton, in the Bride of Lammermoor; the quaint figure of Dominie Sampson, in Guy Mannering; and the original traits of Jonathan Oldbuck, in the Antiquary. It is said that of all his novels, Scott himself preferred *The Antiquary*, although an author's liking for any one of his books is not often a good criterion for a reader.

In so wide a range to choose from, it is difficult to settle upon an extract from Scott's novels which shall give an example of his style. I have finally taken a scene from *Ivanhoe*, the most universally read of all his books; and after that a scene from *Kenilworth*.

The scene from *Ivanhoe* is from the description of the grand tournament, held by Prince John Lackland, at Ashby, in which Robin Hood, under the disguise of Locksley, wins the prize for his skill in archery.

The sound of trumpets soon recalled those spectators who had already began to leave the field, and proclamation was made that Prince John, suddenly called by high and peremptory public duties, held himself obliged to discontinue the entertainments of to-morrow's festival. Nevertheless, that, unwilling so many good yeomen should depart without a trial of skill, he was pleased to appoint them, before leaving the ground, presently to execute the competition of archery intended for the morrow. To the best archer a prize was to be awarded, being a bugle-horn mounted with silver, and a silken baldric richly ornamented with a medallion of St. Hubert, the patron of sylvan sport.

"More than thirty yoemen at first presented themselves as competitors, several of whom were rangers and under-keepers in the royal forests of Needword and Charmwood. When, however, the archers understood with whom they were to be matched, upwards of twenty withdrew from the contest, unwilling to encounter the dishonor of almost certain defeat, for in those days the skill of each celebrated marksman was as well known for many miles around him, as the qualities of a horse trained at Newmarket are familiar to those who frequent that well-known meeting.

The diminished list of competitors for sylvan fame still amounted to eight. Prince John stepped from his royal seat to view more nearly the persons of these chosen yoemen, several of whom wore the royal livery. Having satisfied his curiosity by this investigation, he looked for the object of his resentment,* whom he observed standing on the same spot, and with the same composed countenance which he had exhibited on a previous day.

"Fellow," said Prince John, "I guessed by thy insolent babble thou wert no true lover of the long-bow, and I see thou darest not adventure thy skill among such merry men as stand yonder."

"Under favor, sir," returned the yeoman, "I have another reason for refraining to shoot, besides the fearing discomfiture and disgrace!"

"And what is thy other reason," said Prince John; who, for some cause which perhaps he could not himself have explained, felt a painful curiosity respecting this individual.

"Because," replied the woodsman, "I know not if these yeomen and I are used to shoot at the same mark; and because, moreover, I know not how your Grace might relish the winning of a prize by one who has unwittingly fallen under your displeasure."

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*This was Locksley, or Robin, whom the Prince had noticed the preceding day applauding a Saxon triumph, which John interpreted as an insult to the Norman side.

Prince John colored as he put the question: "What is thy name, yoeman?"

"Locksley," answered the yeoman.

"Then, Locksley," said the Prince, "thou shalt shoot in thy turn, when these yeoman have displayed their skill. If thou carriest the prize, I will add to it twenty nobles; but if thou losest it, thou shalt be stript of thy Lincoln green, and scourged out the list with bow-strings, for a wordy and insolent braggart!"

"And how if I refuse to shoot on such a wager!" said the yeoman; "your Grace's power, supported as it is by so many men-at-arms may indeed easily strip and scourge me, but cannot compel me to draw my bow?"

"If thou refusest my fair proffer," said the Prince, "the Provost of the lists shall cut thy bow-string; break thy bow and arrows, and expel thee from the presence as a faint-hearted craven."

"This is no fair chance you put on me, proud Prince," said the yeoman, "to compel me to peril myself against the best archers of Leicester and Staffordshire, under penalty of infamy if they should overshoot me. Nevertheless, I will obey your pleasure."

"Look to him close, men-at-arms," said Prince John, "his heart is sinking; I am jealous lest he attempts to escape the trial. And do you, good fellows, shoot boldly round; a brick and a butt of wine are ready for your refreshment in yonder hut, when the prize is won."

A target was placed at the upper end of the southern avenue which led to the lists. The contending archers took their station in turn, at the bottom of the southern access; the distance between that station and the mark allowing full distance for what was called a shot at rovers. The archers, having previously determined by lot their order of precedence, were to shoot each three shafts in succession. The sports were regulated by an officer of inferior rank, termed the Provost of the games; for the high rank of the marshals of the lists would have been held degraded had they condescended to superintend the sports of the yeomanry.

One by one, the archers, stepping forward, delivered their shafts, yeoman-like and bravely. Of twenty-four arrows shot in succession, ten were fixed in the target, and the others ranged so near it, that considering the distance of a mark, it was accounted good archery. Of the ten shots which hit the target, two within the inner ring were shot by Hubert, a forester in the service of Malvoisin, who was accordingly pronounced victorious.

"Now, Locksley," said Prince John, to the bold yeoman with a bitter smile, "wilt thou try conclusions with Hubert, or wilt thou yield up bow, baldrick and quiver to the Provost of the sports?"

"Sith it be no better," said Locksley. "I am content to try my fortune on condition that when I have shot two shafts at yonder mark of Hubert's, he shall be bound to shoot one at that which I shall propose."

"That is but fair," answered Prince John, "and it shall not be refused thee. If thou doest beat this braggart, Hubert, I'll fill the bugle with silver pennies for thee."

"A man can but do his best," said Hubert, "but my grandsire drew a good long bow at Hastings, and I trust not to dishonor his memory."

The former target was now removed, and a fresh one of the same size placed in its room. Hubert, who, as victor in the first trial of skill had the right to shoot first, took his aim with great deliberation, long measuring the distance with his eye, while he held in his hand his bended bow, with the arrow placed in the string. At length he made a step forward, and raising the bow at the full stretch of his left arm, he drew his bowstring to his ear. The arrow whistled through the air and lighted within the inner ring of the target but not exactly in the centre.

"You have not allowed for the wind, Hubert," said his antagonist, bending his bow, "or that had been a better shot."

So saying, and without showing the least anxiety to pause upon his aim, Locksley stepped to the appointed station, and shot his arrow as carelessly in appearance, as if he had not even looked at the mark. He was speaking almost at the instant the shaft left the bowstring, yet it alighted in the target two inches nearer to the white spot which marked the centre than that of Hubert.

"By the light of Heaven!" said Prince John to Hubert, "an' thou suffer that runagate knave to overcome thee, thou art worthy of the gallows."

Hubert had but one set speech for all occasions, "An' your highness were to hang me," he said, "a man can but do his best. Nevertheless, my grandsire drew a good bow—"

"The foul fiend on thy grandsire and all his generation"—interrupted John, "shoot, knave, and shoot thy best, or it shall be the worst for thee."

Thus exhorted, Hubert resumed his place, and not neglecting the caution he had received from his adversary, he made the necessary allowance for a very light air of wind which had just arisen, and shot so successfully that his arrow alighted in the very heart of the target.

"A Hubert! A Hubert!" shouted the populace, more interested in a known person than in a stranger. "In the clout!—in the clout!—a Hubert for ever!"

"Thou cans't not mend that shot, Locksley," said the Prince, with an insulting smile.

"I will notch his shaft for him, however," replied Locksley. And letting fly his arrow with a little more precaution than before, it lighted right upon that of his competitor, which it split to shivers. The people who stood around were so astonished at his wonderful dexterity, that they could not even give vent to their surprise in their usual clamor. "This must be the devil, and no man of flesh and blood," whispered the yeomen to each other, "such archery was never seen since a bow was first bent in Britain."

"And now," said Locksley, "I will crave your Grace's permission to plant such a mark as is used in the North country, and welcome every brave yeoman who shall try a shot at it, to win a smile from the bonny lass he loves best."

He then turned to leave the lists. "Let your guards attend me," he said, "if you please, I go but to cut a rod from the next willow bush."

Prince John made a signal that some attendants should follow him in case of his escape, but the cry of "shame! shame!" which burst from the multitude, induced him to alter his ungenerous purpose.

Locksley returned almost instantly with a willow wand, about six feet in length, perfectly straight, and rather thicker than a man's thumb. He began to peel this with great composure, observing at the same time, that to ask a good woodsman to shoot at a target so broad as had hitherto been used, was to put shame upon his skill.

"For his own part," he said, "and in the land where he was bred, men would as soon take for their mark King Arthur's round table, which held sixty knights around it. A child of seven years' old,' he said, "might hit yonder target with a headless shaft; but," he added, walking deliberately to the other end of the lists, and sticking the willow wand upright in the ground, "he that hits that rod upright at five-score yards, I call him an archer fit to bear both bow and quiver before a king, were it stout King Richard himself."

"My grandsire," said Hubert, "drew a good bow at the battle of Hastings, and never shot at such a mark in his life, and neither will I. If this yeoman can cleave that rod, I give him the buckles—or rather, I yield to the devil that is in his jerkin, and not to any human skill; a man can but do his best, and I will not shoot where I am sure to miss. I might as well shoot at the end of our parson's whittle, or at a wheat straw, or at a sunbeam, as at a twinkling white streak which I can hardly see."

"Cowardly dog," said Prince John, "Sirrah Locksley, do thou shoot; but if thou hittest such a mark I will say thou art the first who has

ever done so. However it be, thou shall not crow over us with a mere show of superior skill."

"I will do my best, as Hubert says," answered Locksley, "no man can do more."

So saying, he again bent his bow, but on the present occasion looked with attention to his weapon, and changed the string which he thought was no longer truly round, having been a littled frayed by the two former shots. He then took his aim with some deliberation, and the multitude waited the event in breathless silence. The archer vindicated their opinion of his skill; his arrow split the rod against which it was aimed. A jubilee of acclamations followed, and even Prince John, in admiration of Locksley's skill, lost his dislike to his person, "These trusty nobles," he said, "which, with the bugle, thou hast fairly won, are thine own; we will make them fifty if thou wilt take livery and service with us as a yeoman of our body-guard, and be near to our person; for never did so strong a hand bend a bow, or so keen an eye direct a shaft."

"Pardon me, noble Prince," saith Locksley, "but I have vowed that if ever I take service, it should be with your royal brother King Richard. These twenty nobles I leave to Hubert, who has this day drawn as brave a bow as his grandsire did at Hastings. Had his modesty not refused the trial he would have hit the mark as well as I."

Hubert shook his head as he received with reluctance the bounty of the stranger, and Locksley, anxious to escape further observation, mixed with the crowd and was seen no more.

TALK LIX.

On Walter Scott, the Novelist.

The novel of Kenilworth has for its main incident the visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Leicester at his castle of Kenilworth, and the festivities that were made to entertain her. The dramatic part of the story is the meeting of the Queen with Amy Robsart, whom Leicester has secretly married, wishing to keep this marriage from the knowledge of his royal mistress. One of the most powerful situations in all

Scott's novels is given in the following extract. The Queen is walking in the gardens of Kenilworth, when by chance she enters a grotto, in which Amy Robsart, who has come to the castle without the knowledge of her husband, has concealed herself.

Then the Queen became aware that a female figure was placed beside, or rather partly behind, an alabaster column, at the foot of which arose a pellucid fountain, which occupied the inmost recesses of the grotto. As she advanced she became doubtful whether she beheld a statue or a form of flesh and blood. The unfortunate Amy, indeed, remained motionless, betwixt the desire she had to make her condition known to one of her own sex, and her awe for the stately form which approached her, and which, although her eyes had never before beheld, her fears instantly suspected to be the person she really was. Amy had risen from her seat with the purpose of addressing the lady who entered the grotto alone, and, as she at first thought, so opportunely. But when she recollected the alarm which Leicester had expressed at the Queen knowing aught of their union, and became more and more satisfied that the person she now beheld was Elizabeth herself, she stood with one foot advanced and one withdrawn, her arms, head and hands, perfectly motionless, and her cheek as pallid as the alabaster column against which she leaned. Her dress was a pale sea-green silk, little distinguished in that imperfect light, and somewhat resembled the drapery of some Grecian nymph, such a disguise having been thought the most secure where so many maskers and revellers were assembled, so that the Queen's doubt of her being a living form was justified by all contingent circumstances, as well as by her bloodless cheek and fixed eye.

From her dress, and the casket which she instinctively held in her hand, Elizabeth naturally conjectured that this beautiful but mute figure which she beheld was a performer in one of the theatrical pageants, which had been placed in different situations to surprise her with their homage; and that the poor player, overcome with awe at her presence, had either forgot the part assigned her, or lacked courage to go through with it. It was natural and courteous to give her some encouragement; and Elizabeth accordingly said, in a tone of condescending kindness: "How now, fair nymph of this lovely grotto; art thou spell-bound, and struck with dumbness by the charms of this wicked enchantress, whom men term Fear. We are his common enemy, maiden, and can reverse his charm. Speak, we command thee."

Instead of answering her by speech, the unfortunate countess

dropped on her knee before the Queen; let the casket fall from her hand, and clasping her hands together, looked up in the Queen's face in such an agony of fear and supplication, that Elizabeth was considerably affected."

"What may this mean?" she said: "this is a stronger passion than befits the occasion; stand up, damsel; what would'st thou have with us!"

"Your protection, madam," faltered the unhappy petitioner.

"Each daughter of England has it while she is worthy of it," replied the Queen: "but your distress seems to have deeper root than a forgotten task. Why, and in what do you crave our protection?"

Amy hastily endeavored to recall what she were best to say, which might secure herself from the imminent dangers which surrounded her without endangering her husband; and plunging from one thought to another, amid the chaos which filled her mind, she could, to the Queen's repeated inquiries in what she sought protection, only falter, "Alas! I know not."

"This is folly, maiden," said Elizabeth impatiently; for there was something in the extreme confusion of the supplicant which irritated her curiosity as well as interested her feelings. "The sick man won't tell his malady to the physician, nor are we accustomed to ask questions so oft and receive no answer."

"I request, I implore," stammered forth the unfortunate countess, "I beseech your gracious protection—against—against—one—Varney." She choked, well-nigh, as she uttered the fatal word, which was instantly caught up by the Queen.

"What Varney? Sir Richard Varney, the servant of Lord Leicester? What, damsel, are you to him, or he to you?"

"I—I—was his prisoner, and he practised on my life, and I broke forth to—to ——."

"To throw thyself on my protection, doubtless," said Elizabeth. "Thou shalt have it—that is, if thou art worthy—for we will sift this matter to the uttermost. Thou art," she said, bending on the countess an eye which seemed designed to pierce her very inmost soul, "thou art Amy, daughter of Sir Hugh Robsart, of Lidcote Hall?'

"Forgive me, forgive me, most gracious princess," said Amy, dropping once more on her knee.

"For what should I forgive thee, silly wench?" said Elizabeth; "for being the daughter of thine own father? Thou art brain-sick, surely. Well, I see, I must wring the story from thee by inches. Thou dids't deceive thine old and honored father—thy look confesses it, and married this same Varney."

Amy sprung to her feet, and interrupted the Queen, eagerly, with

"No, madame, no! as there is a God above us, I am not the wife of that contemptible slave—of that most deliberate villain! I am not the wife of Varney! I would rather be the bride of Destruction."

The Queen, overwhelmed in her turn by Amy's vehemence, stood silent for an instant, and then replied, "Why, God ha' mercy! woman—I see thou can'st talk fast enough when the theme likes thee. Nay, tell me, woman," she continued, for to the impulse of curiosity was added that of undefined suspicion that some deception had been practised on her—"tell me, woman—for by God's day, I WILL know, whose wife, or whose paramour, art thou. Speak out and be speedy. Thou wert better dally with a lioness than with Elizabeth."

"Urged to this extremity, dragged as it were by irresistible force to the verge of the precipice, which she saw, but could not avoid, permitted not a moment's respite by the eager words and menancing gestures of the offended Queen, Amy uttered in despair, "the Earl of Leicester knows all."

"The Earl of Leicester!" said Elizabeth, in utter astonishment, "the Earl of Leicester," she repeated, with kindling anger, "woman, thou art set on to this—thou dost belie him—he takes no keep of such things as thou art. Thou art suborned to slander the noblest lord and the truest-hearted gentleman in England. But were he the right hand of my own trust, or something yet dearer to us, thou shalt have thy hearing and that in his presence; come with me, come with me, instantly!"

As Amy shrank back in terror, which the incensed Queen interpreted as conscious guilt, Elizabeth hastily advanced, seized on her arm, and hastened with swift and long steps out of the grotto, and along the principal alley of the Pleasance, dragging with her the terrified countess, whom she held by the arm, and whose utmost exertions could but just keep pace with those of the indignant Queen.

Leicester was at this moment the center of a splendid group of lords and ladies assembled together under an arcade or portico, which closed the alley. The company had drawn together in that place to attend the commands of her majesty, when the hunting-party should go forward; and their astonishment may be imagined, when instead of seeing Elizabeth advance toward them with her usual measured dignity of motion, they beheld her walking so rapidly that she was in the midst of them ere they were aware, and then observed with fear and surprise, that her features were flushed between anger and agitation, that her hair was loosened by her haste of motion, and that her eyes sparkled as they were wont when the spirit of Henry VIII mounted highest in his daughter; nor they were less astonished at the appearance of the pale, attenuated, half-dead, and yet

lovely female whom the Queen upheld by main strength with one hand, while with the other she waived aside the ladies and nobles who pressed towards her under the idea that she was taken suddenly ill.

"Where is my Lord of Leicester!" she said in a tone that thrilled with astonishment all the courtiers who stood around; "stand forth, my Lord of Leicester!"

If, in the midst of the most serene day of summer, when all is light and laughing around, a thunderbolt were to fall from the clear, blue vault of heaven, and rend the earth at the very feet of some careless traveler, he could not gaze upon the smoldering chasm which so unexpectedly yawned before him, with half the astonishment and fear which Leicester felt at the sight that so suddenly presented itself. He had at that instant been receiving, with a politic affectation of disavowing and misunderstanding their meaning—the half-uttered, half-intimated congratulations upon the favor of the Queen; carried, apparently, to its highest pitch during the interview of that morning, from which most of them seemed to augur that he might soon arise from their equal in rank to become their master. And now, while the subdued yet proud smile with which he disclaimed these inferences was yet curling his cheek, the Queen shot into the circle, her passion excited to the uttermost, and supporting with one hand, and apparently without effort, the pale and sinking form of his almost expiring wife, and pointing with the finger of the other to her half-dead features, demanded in a voice that sounded in the ears of the astounded statesman, like the last trumpet call—that is to summon body and soul to the judgment-seat—"*Knowest thou this woman?*"

Scott's success as a novelist in his own time was immediate and complete. From the first publication of *Waverley* the fame and fortune it brought was like the wonders of a fairy-tale. He had always made money freely by his poems. One of the least popular of these had sold ten thousand copies in three months, but this success was nothing to the success of the novels. From one story alone he received in two months three thousand pounds. It was like the opening up of a gold mine. The ease with which money flowed in upon him, was only equalled by the ease and rapidity with which he wrote. His pen seemed never to tire. As he said himself: "When I once get my pen to paper, it will walk of itself."

One would have thought him secure from pecuniary trouble, when almost without warning the firms of his publisher and printer failed. From the fact of his secret partnership, entered into so long since with Ballantyne, Scott found himself liable for the debts of the firm. At fifty-four years old, he was overwhelmed with a debt of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds for the printing-firm, besides thirty thousand pounds of private debts, for his beloved Abbotsford.

Always manly, cheerful and brave, Scott accepted the position at once, declared that he could and would pay it all, and with his characteristic saying, "Time and I against any two," he sat down at once to work. There were men noble enough to come to his aid. The young Duke of Buccleugh offered to assume alone the whole debt, but Scott refused all such offers. For answer, new novels began to appear at rapid intervals. In five years he had paid nearly half the debt with interest. He had been able to keep Abbotsford, and after his death this was preserved to his family.

But such work as this was too much even for such capacity for work as his. During his literary career he was author of many other books than the poems and novels which make his fame. He had edited the works of Dean Swift with a biography, in nineteen volumes; he had written a voluminous life of Napoleon; he was the author of a history of Scotland; he had furnished articles for cyclopedias, magazines and current literature; all these, with historical and biographical sketches had come from this fertile pen. His was a life of almost unparalleled industry, and it is not strange that, while still in the vigor of age, the cord should snap by its strain—that the pitcher should be broken at the fountain. In the midst of his work he had a paralytic stroke, the natural result of such mental efforts.

Even after he was taken ill he would do prodigies of work, and often dictate from his bed while in pain and in mental weariness. In 1830 he had a third stroke of par-

alysis. Even after this he finished his two last novels, *Count Robert of Paris* and *Castle Dangerous*. He went, in 1831, on a tour in Europe; returned home very ill to Abbotsford to die there. He called one day for his pen, but the hand that had been so untiring could not hold it; it dropped from his grasp. The tears rolled down his cheeks as he bade farewell in that last effort to the work which was his life, and from that time he failed rapidly, and in 1832, at the age of sixty-one, he died.

His death and the close of his work, seems to me to form a fit point at which to close the story of English literature. About the time that he passed off the stage, there were entering upon it some of the men now foremost in the literature of to-day—the living authors upon whom Time has not yet passed its verdict. With the death of Scott, therefore, I leave the history of the literature of the past. The history of the literature of our living writers belongs to the future.

SPECIMENS

OF

ENGLISH LITERATURE

UP TO THE TIME OF CHAUCER,

FROM THE EIGHTH TO THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

FROM BEOWULF.

(PROBABLY THE EIGHTH CENTURY.)

[ORIGINAL.]	[TRANSLATION.]
Tha com of more	Then came from the moor
under mist-hleothum	under the mist-hill
Grendel gongan,	Grendel stalking,
Godes yrre bær.	he God's anger bare.
Mynte se man-scatha	Hoped the wicked spoiler,
manna cynnes	of the race of men
sumne besyrwan	one to ensnare
in sele tham hean;	in the lofty hall;
wod under wolcnum,	he strode under the clouds
to thæs the win-reced,	till he the wine-house,
gold-sele gumena,	the golden hall of men,
gearwost wisse,	most clearly saw,
fættum fahne.	richly decorated.

FIRST FOUR VERSES OF THE EIGHTH PSALM.

(NINTH CENTURY.)

Dryhten, Dryhten ure hu wunderlic is noma thin in ealre eorthan, for-thon up-ahefen is micelnis thin ofer heofenas, of muthe cildra milc-teondra thu gefremedest lof fore feondum thi num, thaet thu to-weorpe feond and ge-scildend.

For-thon ic geseo heofenas, weorc fingra thina, monan and steorran tha thu ges tathuladest, hwæt is mon, thæt ge-myndig thu sie his, oththe sunu monnes for-thon thu neosast hine?

FROM LAYAMON'S BRUT.

(LATE TWELFTH OR EARLY THIRTEENTH CENTURY.)

[ORIGINAL.]	[TRANSLATION.]
Tha the Arthur wes king,	When that Arthur was king
hærme nu scollie thing;	Harken now a marvelous thing;
he wes mete-custi	He was liberal
ælche quike monne;	To each man alive.
cniht mid than bezste;	Knight with the best,
wunder ane kene,	Wondrously keen.
he wes than yungen for fader	He was to the young for father,
than alden for frouer,	To the old for comforter,
and with than unwise,	And with the unwise
wunder ane sturnne,	Wonderfully stern.
woh him wes wunder lath	Wrong was to him exceeding loathsome
and that righte a leof.	And the right ever dear.

LOVE POEM.

(LATE THIRTEENTH CENTURY.)

When the nyhtegale singes, the wodes waxen grene,
Lef ant gras ant blosme springes in Averyl y wene
Ant love is to myn herte gon with one spere so kene
Nyht ant day my blod hit drynkes, myn herte deth me tene.

Ich have loved al this yer that I may love na more;
Ich have siked many syk, lemmon for thin ore;
Me wis lovè never the ner, ant that we reweth sore.
Swete lemmon, thench on me, ich have loved the yore.

[The preceding Poem Modernized.]

When the nightingale sings the woods wax green,
Leaf, and grass, and blossom springs in April, I ween,
And love is to my heart gone with spear so keen,
Night and day my blood it drinkes, my heart doth me teen.*

I have loved all this year that I can love no more,
I have sighed many a sigh, sweet heart for thine ore;†
Nor is love never thee near, and that me rueth sore,
Sweet, sweetheart, think on me, I have love thee yore.‡

FROM PIERS' PLOUGHMAN'S VISION.

(FOURTEENTH CENTURY.)

[ORIGINAL.]	[TRANSLATION.]
Ete not, Ich hote the	Eat not, I charge thee,
till hunger the take,	till hunger thee take,
And sende the sum of his sauce	And send thee some of his sauce
to saver the the betere;	To savor thee the better;
Keep some till soper tyme	Keep some till supper time,
And sit thou not to longe,	and sit thou not too long;
A-rys up ar appetyt	Arise up ere appetite
habbe I-yeten his fulle.	has eaten his fill.
Let not Sir Surfet	Let not Sir Surfeit
Sitten at thi Bord,	Sit at thy board,
Love him not, for he is a lechorer	Love him not, he is a lecherer
likerous of tonge	Likerous of Tongue,
And after many metes,	And after many dishes
his maw is a-longet.	his maw is unfilled.
And yif thou diyete the thus	And if thou diet thee thus
I dar legge bothe min eres	I dare lay both mine ears
That Fisyk schal his forred hod	that Physic shall his furred hood
for his food sulle;	For his food sell;
And eke his cloke of Calabre	And also his cloak of Calaber
with knappes of gold,	With buttons of gold;
And beo Fayn, be my Feith	And be fain by my faith
his Fisyk to lete,	His physic to leave,
And leorne to labre with lond	And learn to labor with land
Lest Lyflode faile.	Lest livelihood fail.

*Teen—grieve. †Ore—pity. ‡Yore—long.

FROM CHAUCER.

The Man of Lawes Tale.

(FOURTEENTH CENTURY.)

O scathful harm, condition of poverte,
  With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded,
To asken help, thee shameth in thin herte,
  If thou non ask, so sore art thou ywounded.
That veray need unwrappeth al thy wound hid.
  Maugre thin hed thou must for indigence,
Or stele, or begge, or borwe thy dispense.

Herken what is the sentence of the wise,
  Bet is to dien than have indigence,
Thy selve neighbour wol thee dispise
  If thou be poure, farewel thy reverence,
Yet of the wise man take this sentence,
  Alle the dayes of poure men ben wicke,
Beware therefore or thou come to that pricke.

LIST OF ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE.

The following list of English Bibles does not include those which were made prior to the invention of printing:

Tyndale's Bible.—Translation, by William Tyndale, of the New Testament—printed 1526. The Pentateuch—printed 1530.

Coverdale's Bible.—First complete translation of the Bible; made by Miles Coverdale—1535. (This is the first Bible in which the Apochryphal books were taken out from the others and put by themselves.)

Matthew's Bible.—Published by the King's printers—1537. Translated by John Rogers, afterwards burned at Smithfield, and printed by him under the assumed name of Thomas Matthew.

Taverner's Bible.—A revision of the Matthew's Bible; edited by Richard Taverner—1539.

The Great Bible, or Cranmer's Bible.—The first translation of the Bible ever authorized by government; done by command of Henry VIII, and edited by Cranmer—1539. This became the Bible for Church use.

Genevan Bible.—Translated by English scholars in Geneva, who had fled from persecution during Queen Mary's reign; published 1560. This was also called the Breeches Bible, because this

text from Genesis, iii, 7, was translated thus: "Then the eyes of them both were opened, and they saw they were naked, and they sewed fig-leaves together and made themselves *breeches*. The Genevan Bible became the Bible of the *households*, especially among the Puritans.

BISHOP'S BIBLE.—Translated by a commission of twelve Bishops and four deans, and published—1568.

THE DOUAY BIBLE.—New Testament published at Rheims—1582; the Old Testament at Douay, 1610. This is the version used by Roman Catholics.

KING JAMES' BIBLE.—The Bishop's Bible is the basis of this, thoroughly revised by a learned body of forty-seven Churchmen in the reign of King James—1611. This is the version in common use since that time.

In 1870 a new version was ordered and is nearly completed at the time of present writing (1880). It is done in Westminster by an assembly of the most learned English scholars and Churchmen.

LIST OF ENGLISH POETS LAUREATE.

Among the Greeks it was the custom to crown the poet, successful in a literary contest, with a laurel-wreath. This custom was revived by the Romans, and the laurel, among both ancient nations, was an emblem of the victor poet. Afterwards in Europe—England as well as on the continent—the Universities took up the custom of crowning their best poets with laurel, and gave a degree of *poet-laureate*. But the office of the laureate as a poet of the court does not seem to have been established till the seventeenth century. Chaucer had a pension from the king, as did several other poets later; but there is no proof that they were royal laureates. John Skelton, in Henry the Eighth's reign, received his title of laureate from his university, not from the king. But in the reign of James I, Ben Jonson was created the poet laureate, or poet of the court, with a yearly salary from the office. Since his time there has been a regular succession, as follows:

BEN JONSON.	1630 to 1637
WILLIAM DAVENANT, ...	1637 to 1668
JOHN DRYDEN, ...	1670 to 1688
THOMAS SHADWELL, ...	1689 to 1692
NAHUM TATE, ...	1693 to 1714
NICHOLAS ROWE	1714 to 1718
LAWRENCE EUSDON, ...	1719 to 1730

COLLEY CIBBER,	1730 to 1757
WILLIAM WHITEHEAD,	1758 to 1785
THOMAS WARTON,	1785 to 1790
HENRY JAMES PYE,	1790 to 1813
ROBERT SOUTHEY,	1813 to 1843
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH,	1843 to 1850
ALFRED TENNYSON,	1850 to ——

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*LIST OF SHAKSPEARE'S PLAYS, WHICH APPEARED IN FOLIO OF 1623.

HENRY VI.—PART 1st, printed,	1592
TAMING OF THE SHREW, printed 1607, supposed to be acted,	1593
HENRY VI.—PART 2d, printed	1594
HENRY VI.—PART 3d, printed	1595
LOVE'S LABOR LOST, printed	1598
COMEDY OF ERRORS, mentioned by a contemporary writer,	1598
RICHARD II, printed	1597
RICHARD III, printed,	1597
TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA, mentioned by contemporary writer,	1598
KING JOHN, mentioned by contemporary writer,	1598
ROMEO AND JULIET, printed	1597
MERCHANT OF VENICE, printed 1600; mentioned by contemporary writer	1598
HENRY IV, Part I, printed	1598
HENRY IV, Part II, printed	1600
HENRY V, printed	1600
TITUS ANDRONICAS, printed	1600
MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, printed	1600
AS YOU LIKE IT, printed	1600
MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, printed	1602
TWELFTH NIGHT, acted	1602
OTHELLO, acted	1602
HAMLET, printed	1603
MEASURE FOR MEASURE, acted	1604
ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL—no date	

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* This list does not claim to be correct as to the order of the plays. The dates [illegible] the production of most part of the plays is a matter of doubt. I think how[illegible], that the order I have given is approximately correct. The *Tempest* and [illegible]*ter's Tale* are known to be among his latest plays, and *Love's Labor Lost*, *Ro[illegible] and Juliet*, *Richard II*, and Two Gentlemen of Verona, among his earliest ones.

LEAR, printed, 1608; acted	1607
MACBETH—no date	
TIMON OF ATHENS—no date	
JULIUS CÆSAR—no date	
TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, acted	1609
ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA—no date	
CYMBELINE—no date	
TEMPEST, acted	1611
WINTER'S TALE, acted	1611
HENRY THE VIII, acted	1613
PERICLES, not included in the first folio, printed	1609

[Plays which have been ascribed to SHAKSPEARE.]

EDWARD III, published	1596
TWO NOBLE KINSMEN; published as the work of Fletcher and Shakspeare,	1609 to 1613
SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, printed	1595
THE LONDON PRODIGAL, "	1605
THE YORKSHIRE TRAGEDY, "	1608

[The three last named had WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE on title-page.]

LOCRINE, printed	1595
LORD CROMWELL, "	1613
THE PURITAN,	1607

[The three foregoing had the initials W. S. on title-page.]

ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM, printed	1592
MUCEDORAS, "	1598
MERRY DEVIL OF EDMONTON,	1608
TROUBLESOME REIGN OF KING JOHN,	1611

[W. SH., on title-page.]

FAIR EM,	printed 1631, acted 1591
THE BIRTH OF MERLIN, printed	1662

[By SHAKSPEARE and ROWLEY.]

Of the doubtful plays given above, it is probable that Shakspeare had a share in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*. Many critics believe also in his having written part of Edward III. The rest are all very doubtful in any claim to his authorship. Few English critics believe in any of them; but the claim of each is favored by one or more of the German critics, who are close students of Shakspeare.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SCOTT'S NOVELS.

Published in		Historical date,
1831	Count Robert of Paris	1090
1825	The Betrothed	1187
1825	The Talisman	1193
1819	Ivanhoe	1194
1831	Castle Dangerous	1306–7
1828	The Fair Maid of Perth	1402
1823	Quentin Durward	1470
1829	Anne of Geierstein	1474–7
1820	The Monastery	1559
1820	The Abbott	1568
1821	Kenilworth	1575
1828	The Laird's Jock	1600
1822	The Fortunes of Nigel	1620
1819	A Legend of Montrose	1645
1826	Woodstock	1652
1823	Peveril of the Peak	1660
1817	Old Mortality	1679-90
1821	The Pirate	1700
1828	My Aunt Margaret's Mirror	1700
1819	The Bride of Lammermoor	1700
1816	The Black Dwarf	1708
1817	Rob-Roy	1715
1818	The Heart of Midlothian	1736-51
1814	Waverly	1745
1827	The Surgeon's Daughter	1750
1815	Guy Mannering	1750
1827	The Highland Widow	1755
1827	The Two Drovers	1765
1824	Red Gauntlet	1770
1828	The Tapestried Chamber	1780
1816	The Antiquary	1798
1823	St. Ronan's Well	1800

In this list the novels are not put in the order in which they were published, but according to the time in which their scenes were laid. Thus, Count Robert of Paris, the latest novel published, is the first in order, the historical facts on which it is based occurring in the eleventh century.

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